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Opening the Door, Crossing the Stream: Changing Perspectives and Social Contours of 1990s Shanghai

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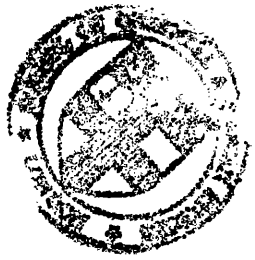

For my parents

Abstract

This thesis comprises a series of ethnographic perspectives on China's largest city, Shanghai. It is based primarily upon seventeen months anthropological research conducted in Shanghai between 1992-94. As befits an ethnography of a contemporary metropolis it draws upon a diverse array of research data from electronic media to magazines and local drama productions. Above all, I focus upon and privilege the voices of local residents as they engaged in reflexive encounters with the ethnographer and other inhabitants. This account, then, is my fabrication of their constructions of their lives and their city.

In the 1990s far-reaching economic reforms have been implemented which are designed to recreate Shanghai as a cosmopolitan, world financial and commercial centre. Policy makers and citizens are engaged in the difficult and potentially hazardous task of "crossing the stream" from a "socialist state planned economy" to a "socialist market economy", a transition which often involves adopting policies dramatically opposed to those which went before. This thesis aims to furnish, in an ethnographically evocative manner, new perspectives and insights on the parameters of that transition, and especially upon how social boundaries and identities are becoming reconfigured.

In 1990s Shanghai many former certainties such as the Communist Party's monologic meta-narrative and boundaries, both spatial and social, are being dismantled, fractured, undermined or crumbling. Increasing choice, mobility and fluidity are unpicking and fraying the once encloistered texture of everyday life. Increasing pluralism, diversity of lifestyles and modes of livelihood provide new opportunities and risks. In the midst of a great deal of flux, ambiguity, uncertainty and juxtapositioning there seems to be evidence of newly emergent social contours such as the shift from predominantly ascribed statuses to greater scope for "aspirational identities".

My narrative reflects these processes, and is critical of discourses which are prone to homogenization or dichotomization, both products of a misplaced urge to over-systematize and essentialize. Inter alia, this thesis explores changing representations of "society" and personal relationships; consumption and consumerism; the (perceived) consequences of Shanghai's half-open "door" to intra-national and global cultural flows; the differential markings of spaces within the city; and the emergent discourse of share dealers. Where possible I draw broad brush strokes but always with attention to the craquelure - those cracks and fissures which comprise them but which may have their own, different, stories to tell.

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Acknowledgements

I express my sincerest thanks to all those Shanghai citizens who enabled me to produce this thesis. To retain anonymity, no personal names have been used. Those Shanghainese whose contributions were especially great will not see their names here but I repeat again my thanks to them.

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Illustrations

Notes on the text

Official Exchange Rates, Pounds and Chinese Yuan (¥)

1980 1 pound = 3.5 *yuan*
1985 1 pound = 3.8 *yuan*
1990 1 pound = 8.5 *yuan*
1991 1 pound = 9.4 *yuan*
1992 1 pound = 9.8 *yuan*
1993 1 pound = 8.6 *yuan*
1994 1 pound = 13 *yuan*

Romanization

Most names and words are written in Mandarin, romanized according to the **pinyin** system. A select glossary of characters is provided. When comments were originally made in the Shanghai dialect I provide a transliteration based upon the phonetic system used in Thomas Creamer's (1991) A Chinese-English Dictionary of the Wu Dialect. Shanghai dialect terms can be located in the Glossary under their Mandarin equivalent. Mandarin terms are given in **bold** and dialect terms in *italics*.

Glossary of Key Terms

This glossary is ordered alphabetically with Mandarin/**pinyin**, terms in **bold**, and Shanghai dialect terms in *italics*. In this select glossary only terms which have been used several times or which cannot readily be found in the standard Chinese-English Dictionary (1988) are included.

Characters and Short Phrases

ah xiang/*a xiang* 阿乡

Ah Tu Sheng/*A Tu Sang* 阿土生

ai mianzi 爱面子

aiguo yu 爱国鱼

anding tuanjie 安定团结

anxin gongzuo 安心工作

bai/lanling 白/蓝领

baixiang = wan/*ba xiang* 白相 = 玩

bangpai 帮派

baofahu 暴发户

baogongtou 包工头

baoshou tiemen 保守铁门

baozhuang 包装

bazi 巴子

beihou caozong 背后操纵

bi shang Liangshan 逼上梁山

bianxing 变形

biaoxian ziji 表现自己

biguan zhengce 闭关政策

biguan zishou 闭关自守

bise zhengce 闭塞政策

bu da qiao/*va ta ga* 不搭桥/勿搭界

bu zheng zhi feng 不正之风

bu kao laoli 不靠劳力

bu lao er huo 不劳而获

bu yi zhi cai 不义之财

buguan xing 'she', xing 'zi' 不管姓社姓资

buzi kuai yixie 步子快一些

chadui luohu xiongdi 插队落户兄弟

chaichuan xiyangjing 拆穿西洋镜

chamei 插妹

changkai damen 敞开大门

chao gupiao 炒股票

chao you yu/*tso hiu hu* 炒鱿鱼

chaxiong 插兄

chenggongzhe 成功者

chi daguo fan 吃大锅饭

chi gongkuan 吃公款

chi guansi 吃官司

chi guojia de 吃国家的

chi kongxin tangyuan 吃空心汤圆

chi laogong 吃老共

chi lixi 吃利息

chi ruanfan 吃软饭

chi sheng huo/*tci sang huo* 吃生活

chi waihui de ren 吃外汇的人

chihe wanle 吃喝玩乐

chouti dangjia 抽屉当家

chu ke xiongdi 出科兄弟

chu fengtou/*tse fong dii* 出风头

Chuan Jun 川军

chuangkou 窗口

chuangzi 窗子

chugong bu chuli 出工不出力

chuguo dujin 出国渡金

chuguore 出国热

chukou zhuan neixiao 出口转内销

chulu 出路

chuxu fanglao 储蓄防老

dabing 大饼

da di 打的

da jia na 大家拿

da jian 大件

da nanzizhuyi 大男子主义

da paidang 大排档

da shehui, xiao zhengfu 大社会，小政府

da tuanjie 大团结

dadao guoji shuiping 达到国际水平

dageda jieceng 大哥大阶层

dahu 大户

dahushi 大户室

daigou 代购

daiye xiagang 待业下岗

dajia zaocheng de qihou 大家造成的气候

dakai shuizha 打开水闸

dakai chuangzi 打开窗子

dakuan 大款

dangan 档案

dangguan de 当官的

dangjia/*dang ka* 当家

danwei 单位

danzi da yidian 胆子大一点

daochu zuan xiao pianyi 到处钻小便宜

dayi mie qin 大义灭亲

dazhangxing 打仗性

dazhaxie/*du za ha* 大闸蟹

di shui chuan shi 滴水穿石

di er zhiye 第二职业

dianxin/dimsum 点心

difanghua 地方化

duanlian 锻炼

dubo guojia 赌博国家

duchang 赌场

duiwai kaifang 对外开放

dulixing bijiao qiang 独立性比较强

duo zuo, duo cuo 多做，多错

duxing da 赌性大

facai de shouduan 发财的手段

fahui ziji de caineng 发挥自己的才能

fanpai gongsi 反牌公司

fashaoyou 发烧友

fazhi 法制

feichang cha/*bi jia le xi* 非常差 / 蹩脚来西

feilixing 非理性

fen er zhizhi 分而治之

fendou sixiang 奋斗思想

fendouxing 奋斗性

feng 风

fengbixing 封闭性

gaige kaifang 改革开放

ganghua 港化

gangtai 港台

ganqing nong de gushi 感情浓的股市

ganqing touzi 感情投资

ganyu mao fengxian 敢于冒风险

gao bu qingchu 搞不清楚

gao di xiaofei 高/低 消费

gao biaomian wenzhang 搞表面文章

gao xiandaihua 搞现代化

gaogan zidi 高干子弟

gaoji xiaofei 高级消费

ge ren guan ge ren 个人管个人

ge rou 割肉

geming luosiding 革命螺丝钉

gendilong 滚地龙

gengzhe you qi tian 耕者有其田

geren ziyou 个人自由

geren chengshu 个人成熟

gerenhua 个人化

getihu 个体户

gongfang 公房

gongtong yuyan 共同语言
gongxi facai 恭禧发财
gongxian 贡献
gongzi 工资
gongzuo xuyao 工作需要
goutong 沟通
gua yangtou, mai gourou 挂羊头，卖狗肉
gua 刮
guaibin 怪宾
guan shang bu fen 官商不分
guan paitou/*gue pa dü* 摆派头
guandao 官倒
guanhua 官话
guanmen cheng dawang 关门称大王
guanxi wang 关系网
guanzhu ziji 关注自己
gudubing 孤独病
guhai 股海
guizu 贵族
gumin 股民
guo you qiye 国有企业
guoji de ganjue 国际的感觉
guoji weixin 国际威信
guojia jiguan 国家机关
guoying qiye 国营企业
gupiaore 股票热
gupiaozhe 股票者
guyou 股友
haipai wenxue 海派文学
haiwai guanxi 海外关系
haiwai qitan 海外奇谈
heixiong 黑兄
heshang 河殇
hongbao 红包

houtai hen ying 后台很硬

huajie 华界

huajixi 滑稽戏

huan naodai 换脑袋

huan naozi 换脑子

huangniu 黄牛

huanzhai 还债

huaqiao 华侨

huayi 华裔

huise shouru 灰色收入

huisu wangshi 回溯往事

huju 沪剧

hukou 户口

hun fan chi/*hun ve tci* 混饭吃

hun rizi/*hun nijia* 混日子

jianada/**da jia na** 加拿大 / 大家拿

jiang mingli 讲名利

Jiangbeiren/*Gang bu nin* 江北人

jianghu yiqi 江湖义气

jianghua suanshu 讲话算数

jiangjin 奖金

jiaowang guozheng 矫枉过正

jiating rongqia 家庭融洽

jiatingxing 家庭性

jie Caishen 接财神

jieceng 阶层

jiefang sixiang 解放思想

jiegui 接轨

jieji douzheng 阶级斗争

jieshaoren 介绍人

jieshoubuliao 接受不了

jiexian 界线

jingji wanneng 经济万能

jingji guilu 经济规律

jingjing you tiao 井井有条

jingjiren 经纪人

jingshen wenming fen 精神文明分

jingzheng 竞争

jinqian benwei 金钱本位

jishu fenxi 技术分析

jiti 集体

jiurou pengyou 酒肉朋友

jixing 畸形

jizi jianfang 集资建房

junshi yishi 军事意识

juti de jiexian 具体的界线

kai houmen 开后门

kaifang 开放

kan xxx de mianzi 看 xxx 的面子

kao lao pengyou de mianshang 靠老朋友的面上

kao gongzi chifan de 靠工资吃饭的

kaolu ziji 考虑自己

kong madai bei mi 空麻袋背米

kong jiazi 空架子

konghua 空话

kuangjia kazhu 框架卡住

kuangzi shi kuang de hen si 框子是框得很死

kuoda kaifang 扩大开放

la guanxi 拉关系

lan tanzi 烂摊子

landiao/le te 烂掉了/了

lao/lo 捞

lao Shanghai 老上海

lao ganbu 老干部

lao xiang 老乡

lao huangniu 老黄牛

lao niangjiu 老娘舅

lao yangzi 老样子

lao yi tao 老一套

lao quanzi 老圈子

lao jiu 老九

laobaixing 老百姓

laoban 老板

laobao 劳保

laogui/*laozhu* 老鬼

laojia 老家

laowufei 劳务费

laowuxing de 劳务性的

li-hai guanxi 利害关系

liang lei cha dao 两肋插刀

liang dian yi xian 两点一线

liang ru weichu 量入为出

lianhe jiandui 联合舰队

lianluo ganqing 联络感情

liansuo fanying 连锁反应

lishi guilu 历史规律

liu zai shehui 留在社会

liudong renkou 流动人口

liushi fen wansui 六十分万岁

liushou nushi 留守女士

liuxuesheng 留学生

luan chi luan yong 乱吃乱用

ludeng 绿灯

luzi hen cu 路子很粗

luzi hen tong 路子很通

madasaodaiban 马大嫂代办 / 买打烧代办

mai/zugei waiguoren 卖/租给外国人

maiban 买办

maikong maikong 买空卖空

man tian guo hai 瞒天过海

mangliu yongru 盲流涌入

maojiao nuxu 毛脚女婿

maoxianjia de leyuan 冒险家的乐园

mayou 麻友

meiren 媒人

meiyou wenhua/*me ven ho* 没有文化 / 吽文化

meiyou ren zhidao/*me nin xiaode* 没有人知道 / 吽人晓得

meiyou qita de chulu 没有其他的出路

menlu 门路

mianzi hen da 面子很大

mingong 民工

mingpai 名牌

mingxian jiexian 明显界线

minzhuhua 民主化

mohu gongzi 模糊工资

momohei/*ma ma ha* 墨墨黑

moqi 默契

mozhe shitou guohe 摸着石头过河

nanchuang feng 南闯风

nanxun 南巡

naozi ziji kaolu duo 脑子自己要考虑多

nei-wai you bie 内外有别

ni bu pulu, lu bu hao zou 你不铺路，路不好走

niangjia 娘家

ninggu 凝固

niugui sheshen 牛鬼蛇神

nongmin 农民

pa mafan/*po mo ve* 怕麻烦

pafen/*bu fen* 扑分

pai mapi 拍马屁

paitou/*pa dü* 派头

paomo jingji 泡沫经济

peijiu nulang 陪酒女郎

peiyang chengshu de gumin 培养成熟的股民

pengdao guan de li 碰到官的利

pengyou bangbangmang 朋友帮帮忙

piaoyou xiahai 票友下海

pibao gongsi 皮包公司

pin ganjue 贫感觉

pin siren guanxi 贫私人关系

poqiang kaidian 破墙开店

Pudonghua 浦东话

Pudongren 浦东人

pulu 铺路

pusa 菩萨

qian renqing 欠人情

qianke'dzi ka 掮客

qianyi mohua 潜移默化

qiguanyan 气管炎/妻管严

qingfugu 情妇股

qingrenjie 情人节

qingxuhua 情绪化

qinqigan 亲戚感

qiong'dziong 穷

qiongguan 穷惯

quan guo chi Shanghai 全国吃上海

quanguo jiegu 全国皆股

quanmin jingshang 全民经商

qunzhong yilun 群众议论

ren cai ren 人踩人

ren wu huang. cai wu fa 人无慌，财无发

ren de qingxu 人的情绪

ren chi ren 人吃人

ren yinman 人隐瞒

ren yu ren zhi jian de guanxi 人与人之间的关系

ren yu ren diyu 人与人地狱

ren zuo le, cha liang le 人走了，茶凉了

rencai liudong 人才流动

rengouzheng 认购证

renminbi 人民币

renqi 人气

renqing guojia 人情国家

renqing da yu zhai 人情大于债

renshi dao ziji 认识到自己

renxin bu gu 人心不古

renzhi 人治

Riben guizi 日本鬼子

ruanjian 软件

rudang zuoguan 入党做官

san shi liu kuai wansui 三十六块万岁

san zi qiye 三资企业

sanhu 散户

saohuang 扫黄

shang le zeichuan 上了贼船

shangzhijiao/*zang tsa ko* 上只角

shang you lao, xia you xiao 上有老,下有小

shangban de 上班的

shangyehua 商业化

shaoxiang 烧香

shehui fengqi 社会风气

shehui fenxi 社会分析

shehui geren gu 社会个人论

shehui guanxi 社会关系

shei ye bu guan shei 谁也不管谁

sheng-si zhi jiao 生死之交

shengdanhua/*seng de ho* 圣诞花

shenghuo shuiping 生活水平

shenghuo fangshi 生活方式

shengyiren/*sang yi nin* 生意人

shenhua gaige 深化改革

shenme ren fu le/*sa nin fu la?* 什么人富了 / 啥人富了

shenqi secai de shijie 神奇色彩的世界

shi san dian 十三点

shi li yangchang 十里洋场

shi mianzi/te de 失面子 / 塌台
shi kumen 石库门
shijingyu 市井语
shikou 市口
shimin jieceng 市民阶层
shiminggan 使命感
shiqi 市气
shiqu ziji 失去自己
shizhan caihua 施展才华
shui zhang chuan gao 水涨船高
shuidao qucheng 水到渠成
shuiluo shichu 水落石出
shunshui tui zhou 顺水推舟
sifangqian/*si fang di* 私房钱 / 私房佃
silu yi tiao 死路一条
siren bu guan/*xi nin va kue* 死人不管
sixiang gaibian 思想改变
sixiang yali 思想压力
siying qiye laoban 私营企业老板
song renqing/*song nin jing* 送人情
su bu ke nai 俗不可耐
Su Jun 苏军
Taibao 台胞
Taibazi 台巴子
taizi dang 太子党
tang si ling 汤司令
Tang siling 唐司令
taoyou 套友
taozhu 套住
tatai/**te de** 塌台
tequan jieji 特权阶级
teshu cailiao 特殊材料
tianfan difu 天翻地覆
tiaoban 跳板

tiaocao 跳槽

tie fanwan 铁饭碗

tongguo yifu kan ren 通过衣服看人

tongguo chifan hejiu la guanxi 通过吃饭喝酒拉关系

tonghua 同化

tongliu hewu 同流合污

tongxingzheng 通行证

tongzhi youyi 同志友谊

touji daoba 投机倒把

toumingdu 透明度

tounao huo de ren 头脑活的人

touru le guhai 投入了股海

touting ditai 偷听敌台

toutou 头头

touzi huatou/*dü zi hua lo* 头子滑头 / 头子活络

tuo renqing 托人情

wai luzi 歪路子

waidi laide hua 外地来的话

waidi mingong chao 外地民工潮

waidiren/*na di nin* 外地人

waiguo banfa/*na ko be fa* 外国办法

waikuai/*na kua* 外快

Wan Jun 皖军

wang qian kan 往前/钱看

wanquan waiguohua 完全外国化

wanzheng de geren 完整的个人

wei renmin fuwu 为人民服务

wenhua/*ven ho* 文化

wennuan de jiating 温暖的家庭

wenren xiangqing 文人相轻

wudong yuzhong 无动于衷

xia zhi jiao/*o tsa ko* 下只角

xiaceng ren 下层人

xiagang 下岗

xiahai 下海

xialiu shehui 下流社会

xiandaihua 现代化

xiang facai 想发财

xiang qian kan 向前/钱看

Xiang Jun 湘军

xiangbalao 乡巴佬

xiangxiaren/*xiang o nin* 乡下人

xiangzheng yiyi 象征意义

xiao zhengfu, da shehui 小政府，大社会

xiao liumang 小流氓

xiao hu 小户

xiao xiongdi 小兄弟

xiao zichan jieji 小资产阶级

xiao shimin 小市民

xiaodao xiaoxi 小道消息

xiaofei shuiping 消费水平

xiaofei chengshi 消费城市

xiaofeizhe 消费者

xiaokang shuiping 小康水平

xiaosa 潇洒

xiaoxi lingtong 消息灵通

xiaoyou 校友

xiashui 下水

xiaxiang 下乡

xihua 西化

xin fu jieceng 新富阶层

xin zhong you shu 心中有数

xin de ganjue 新的感觉

xincun 新村

xinli you shu 心里有数

xinli chengshou yali 心理承受压力

xinren 信任

xinwen meijie 新闻媒介

xinwen fengsuo 新闻封锁
xinxiangan 新鲜感
xinxiji 信息机
xinyi 信义
xinyong 信用
xiongshi 熊市
xiyangjing 西洋镜
xuechao 学潮
xuehui ziji sikao 学会自己思考
yan fu en mu 严父恩母
yang boshi 洋博士
yangjingbang 洋泾浜
yangqi 洋气
yanhong 眼红
yanjiu 研究 / 烟酒
yapishi 雅皮士
yasuiqian 压岁钱
yayigan 压抑感
yezonghui 夜总会
yi pan san sha 一盘散沙
yi tao guiju 一套规矩
yikufan 忆苦饭
yimin chengshi 移民城市
yingjian 硬件
yiqi 义气
yiquan mosi 以权谋私
you quan you shi de ren 有钱有势的人
you nai jiushi niang 有奶就是娘
you rou guaduan 优柔寡断
youqing 友情
youshui meiyou le/*hiu si ma la* 油水没有了 / 油水吃了
youtiao 油条
yu hu mou pi 与狐谋皮
yuan qin bu ru jin lin 远亲不如近邻

yuanshi jilei 原始积累
yumin zhengce 愚民政策
zang/*o tso* 脏/龌龊
zenme zuoren 怎么做人
zhan/*tse* 斩
zhandou dianyingyuan 战斗电影院
zhanyou 战友
zhengzhi de guer 政治的弧儿
zhengzhi guashuai 政治挂帅
zhige ahxiang/*di ge a xiang* 这个阿乡/这个阿乡
zhitong daohezhe 志同道合者
zhixin pengyou 知心朋友
zhonghu 中户
zhonghushi 中户室
zhongnong yashang 重农压商
zhou er bu bi 周而不比
zhuan you qing de siwei/qian 赚有情的思维/钱
zhuazhu shiji 抓住时机
zhuzhong ziji 注重自己
ziji zhao chulu 自己找出路
zili gengsheng 自力更生
ziwo chuipeng 自我吹捧
ziwo qiang de duo 自我强得多
zou houmen 走后门
zuan guojia de kongzi 钻国家的空子
zuili bu chi 嘴里不吃
zuo jing guan tian 坐井观天
zuoguan facai 做官发财
zuoren de quanli 做人的权力
zuxian 祖先

Expressions

Beijingren aiguo, Guangzhouren maiguo, Shanghairen chuguo
北京人爱国，广州人卖国，上海人出国

bu renshi ren, shenme shiqing banbudao/*va ning ge nin, sa si ti bɛ va ho*
不认识人，什么事情办不到 / 句认得人，啥事体办句好

bu pa xianguan, jiu pa xian guan
不小白县官，就小白现管

bu huan pin, zhi huan bu jun
不患贫，只患不均

bu yao Pudong yi zhuang lou, zhi yao Puxi yi zhang chuang
不要浦东一幢楼，只要浦西一张床

da ca bian qiu/*tang tsa bi dziu*
打擦边球

da guofan de shitang hai kaizhe
大锅饭的食堂还开着

gexinghua de shenghuo fangshi
个性化的生活方式

dao bu xing, cheng cha fu yu hai
道不行，乘槎浮于海

dao mo de hen kuai/*to mo le lo kua*
刀磨得很快

duo yi ge pengyou, duo yi tiao lu
多一个朋友，多一条路

Gaige kaifang shi jiefang he fazhan shehuizhuyi shengchanli de biyou zhi lu!
改革开放是解放和发展社会主义生产力的必由之路！

geren zi sao men qian xue, mo guan ta ren wa shang shuang
各人自扫门前雪，莫管他人瓦上霜

gushi la qingchu/*ku zi la qing sang*
股市拉清楚

hai ren zhi xin bu ke you, fang ren zhi xin bu ke wu
害人之心不可有，防人之心不可无

jia ji sui ji, jia gou sui gou
嫁鸡随鸡，嫁狗随狗

jia chou bu ke wai yang

家丑不可外扬

jiao ta xiguapi, huadao nali suan dao nali

脚踏西瓜皮，滑到哪里算到哪里

laxi biesan de difang/*laxi pi sɛ ge difang*

垃圾瘪三的地方

long naodai limian de qian, meiyou gao naodai waimian de duo

弄脑袋里面的钱，没有搞脑袋外面的多

maide bu chi, chide bu mai/*ma ge va tci, tci ge va ma*

买的不吃，吃的不买

menkan feichang jing/*men kɛ jing lɛ xi*

门槛非常精！门槛精来西

ni chiguo fan ma/*nong vɛ tci ku le va?*

你吃过饭吗！侬饭吃过了哦？

ningyao shehuizhuyi de cao, bu yao zibenzhuyi de bao

宁要社会主义的草，不要资本主义的宝

qian li zuoguan zhi wei cai, bu wei huangjin shei ken lai?

千里做官只为财，不为黄金谁肯来？

ren wang gaochu zou, shui shang dichu liu

人往高处走，水往低处流

renqing da guo wangfa, renqing shi zhi zhang de bao

人情大过王法，人情是纸张的薄

san nian qingguan zhifu, shi wan xuehua yin

三年清官知府，十万雪花银

shangmian you zhengce, xiamian you duice

上面有政策，下面有对策

shui zhi qing ze wu yu

水至清则无鱼，

shui neng zai zhou, yi neng fu zhou

水能载舟，亦能覆舟

shui wang dichu liu, ren wang gaochu zou

水往低处流，人往高处走

tianxia dashi, fenjiu bihe, hejiu bifen

天下大事，分久必合，合久必分

ting dang de hua, gen Mao Zedong zou

听党的话，跟毛泽东走

wan yuan bu shi hu, shiwan cai qibu, baiwan suan xiaohu, qianwan shi dahu

万元不是户，十万才起步，百万算小户，千万是大户

wo kao nide paitou/*nu zao nong ge pa dü*

我靠你的派头/*俄照侬哈派头*

women Shanghairen/*a la Sang he nin*

我们上海人/*阿拉上海人*

women zijia ren/*a la zi ga nin*

我们自家人/*阿拉自家人*

women zhongguoren/*a la zong ku nin*

我们中国人/*阿拉中国人*

Wu shi niandai, ren bang ren. Liu shi niandai, ren dou ren. Qi shi niandai, ren pian ren

五人年代，人帮人。六十年代，人斗人。九十年代，人骗人。

yamen bazi kai, you li wu qian mo jin lai

衙门八字开，有理无钱莫进来

yan duo cai bu huai, li duo ren bu guai

盐多菜不坏，礼多人不怪

yang zhuang biesan, ziji shaofan

洋装瘪三，自己烧饭

yang er fang lao, zhong shu tu ying liang

养儿防老，种树图荫凉

yi nian bian ge yang, san nian da bian yang

一年变个样，三年大变样

yi ren dedao, ji quan sheng tian

一人得道 鸡犬升天

yi ri wei shi, zhong sheng wei fu

一日为师，终生为父

you qian neng shi gui tui mo, you qian neng shi mo tui gui

有钱能使鬼推磨，有钱能使磨推鬼

zai jiali kao qinqi, zai waimian kao pengyou bangmang

在家里靠亲戚，在外面靠朋友帮忙

zao zhi jinri, hebi dangchu

早知今日，何必当初

Zhenxing Shanghai, kaifa Pudong, fuwu quan guo, mianxiang shijie!

振兴上海，开发浦东，服务全国，面向世界！

zhige ren shi xiazhijiao laide/*di ge nin si ho tsa ko lei ge*

这个人是下只角来的 / 迭个人是下只角来咯

Zhongguoren shuohua, bu suanshu/*Zong ku nin gang e wu, va su su*

中国人说话，不算数 / 中国人讲闲话，勿算数

zuiba yao jin, koudai yao song

嘴巴要紧，口袋要松

zuo erzi yao yang lao, yang xiao

做儿子要养老，养小

Abbreviations

Chinese Publications

JFRB **Jiefang Ribao** - Liberation Daily
MZWYB **Meizhou Wenyi Bao** - Arts News Weekly
MZWYJMB **Meizhou Wenyi Jiemu Bao** - Weekly Arts Programme
NFZM **Nanfang Zhoumo** - Southern Weekend
SWXB **Shanghai Wenxue Bao** - Shanghai Literature Press
SWHYSB **Shanghai Wenhua Yishu Bao** - Shanghai Culture And Arts Newspaper
SWYB **Shanghai Wenyi Bao** - Shanghai Arts Newspaper
SYB **Shanghai Yibao** - Shanghai Translations
WHB **Wenhui Bao** - Wenhui Daily
WHYSB **Wenhui Yishu Bao** - Wenhui Arts Newspaper
WHDYSB **Wenhui Dianying Shibao** - Wenhui Film Newspaper
XMWB **Xinmin Wanbao** - New People's Evening News

English Publications

BR Beijing Review
CD China Daily
CDBW China Daily Business Weekly
CQ The China Quarterly
CR Chinese Repository. 1840-1851 (monthly)
FEER Far Eastern Economic Review
FBIS Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FT Financial Times
SS Shanghai Star
SWB BBC Summary of World Broadcast - Asia Pacific

Introduction

Bus to Xujiahui, two hours standing, crushed, dripping sweat, conductress monotone ***"kaimen qing dangxin"*** *(doors opening, take care). The "Grand Gateway" at Xujiahui Centre, brand new plate glass and concrete shopping cathedral, air conditioning blasts onto the street, the latest imports, name brands, Gucci, Clarks, Rolex. Instant gratification, at a price. Shanghai's new rich buying, the rest gazing, watching. A trip on the newly opened underground, four stops now open. Intense volume of noise in the carriage, everyone engaged in separate conversations. The train, clean, new, swish, room to breathe, arrived at its destination. On the platform a row of people, waiting to board. The train stops, the instant the doors open, they begin to fight their way into the train, battling with the passengers trying to disembark. Later, at dusk, a bus back to the centre of town, somewhere near the old city.*

Walking back across the city in the early evening, people everywhere. Reading newspapers, playing with electronic toy games, playing cards, eating, sleeping, drinking, smoking, fanning themselves. Scrawny ribbed old men, podgy children. Suddenly a small restaurant with Arabic calligraphy, incongruous amongst the Chinese characters. Men with unshaven faces, thick set, swarthy, asking to change money, sell hashish. People everywhere, lolling in deck chairs, picnic chairs, bamboo chairs lashed together with rope, large chairs, tiny stools a few inches high, lying in a deck chair feet up on a small stool.

Houses cramped, dingy; bright, bare neon of the shops contrasting with the houses, dimly lit, darkened, impenetrable interiors. Alleyways, ragged, descend into gloom. Narrow, dense, thick, dank smells, rotting piles of rubbish flowing onto the streets. A man with a whicker basket on his back uses a pair of tongs to sift through decaying mounds of rotting vegetation. Fruit stalls immaculately, beautifully stacked, shiny yellow bananas, polished apples and pears. Restaurants, empty, full, droning, plaintive voices of karaoke singers. Waitresses watching in short yellow skirts and white shirts. Noises, sounds everywhere. An impossible density of people. More than could ever fit into the tiny houses, like an unwrapped child's toy that somehow never fits back into its original box.

In the restaurant downstairs, brass coloured pottery figures of ***Guan Gong*** *- protection. Incense, food smells, cans of beer. Crowned, red-faced, long black beard,* ***gongxi facai****, his right hand wields a heavy sword. Illuminated by two red lamps up behind the bar, perhaps Mao was there once. Side rooms, carved dragons and phoenixes, a single television, karaoke eye waiting for diners. Outside, black car, an Audi, darkened windows, the manager's.*

Retrieve my bicycle, chained up for the day in a side street, cycle back to the university. Freedom of the dark, unseen, unrecognized. The campus gates, dismount by the watchmen, watching. Back on the bike, past silent classrooms to the foreign students building. Lock up the bike, a separate compound for foreigners' bicycles. The old watchman, watches the bikes, the foreigners' bikes, looks over, makes sure I'm not Chinese. Over seventy, cropped hair, speaks with a thick Jiangsu accent, thinks I should be a cadre when I go home, says it was better in the old days, when Mao was around. Into our building, past the watchmen, drinking tea from a clay pot through the spout, wears a Mao cap, no problem. Up the lift, onto our floor, ***aiyi*** *watching. Another door, close the door, no people, alone.*

This thesis is based primarily upon seventeen months anthropological research conducted in Shanghai between 1992-94. It draws upon a diverse array of research data, with an especial and deliberate emphasis upon the voices of local people, their constructions of their own lives, of others, and of their city. In addition to consulting the ever-accelerating number of Western sources, I have also examined intensively local magazines, newspapers, radio and television programmes and plays. In producing a distinctly urban ethnography I take the city of Shanghai as a whole as my fieldwork site. Inevitably I make no claims for "representativeness", but provide both original accounts of, and new perspectives upon, Shanghai and its people. In this somewhat experimental project I am in accord with David Parkin's (1987: 64) suggestion that ethnography is analogous to impressionist painting, for it too provides a series of perspectives upon a theme.

As a topic for research Shanghai is a veritable cornucopia. Until the late 1940s, it had an ambivalent reputation as a cosmopolitan, semi-colonial entrepôt based upon *laissez-faire* capitalism. Under Communist Party rule it then became the centre of a socialist state-planned economy with a greatly diminished international role. The rhetoric of the Maoist period, especially during the Cultural Revolution, divided Chinese society into a limited range of unambiguous categories, stressed equality and egalitarianism and actively sought to "cut off all tails of capitalism". By contrast, current policies - "socialism with Chinese characteristics" - accept (indeed, encourage) that some may get rich first, criticize egalitarianism and permit the emergence of new modes of livelihood. In the last decade the Chinese government's attitude toward Shanghai and other large coastal cities has undergone a striking and radical change. After three decades of official rhetoric which emphasized the need to reduce the economic dominance of cities such as Shanghai, and the neglect of their infrastructure which accompanied this, the government has begun to promote these cities as models of development.

Since 1990 and spurred on especially in 1992, measures have been implemented which are intended to recreate Shanghai as an international financial and commercial centre. Shanghai now retains more of the huge profits made in the city, although still far less than Guangzhou. There has been considerable domestic and foreign capital investment. The latter includes arrangements to lease land to foreigners, joint ventures or projects with foreign companies such as the current construction of an underground system.

The Pudong area in the south east of the city is being redeveloped at tremendous cost and vigorous attempts made to attract foreign investment. An increasingly important

private sector has re-emerged and private markets, restaurants and bars have proliferated along with many joint ventures. The stock market has returned and Shanghai has regained some of its pre-1949 cosmopolitanism. Fortuitously my fieldwork period coincided with this latter phase and I was present during some of the most significant changes to have taken place in Shanghai for at least twenty years. A local writer, a strong supporter of reform, commented to me that the changes in Shanghai during 1991-3 were of an "extent that a person such as myself could never have imagined." Similarly, another informant told me that "now it is not only very interesting for foreigners to be in China but also for us as change is extremely rapid."

In contrast to Maoist China, a welter of statistics now emerges from the PRC. The party-state is particularly keen to flaunt its achievements. China's President, Jiang Zemin, recently announced that from 1979 until the end of 1994, foreign investment in China totalled US $95.6 billion.[1] Jiang added that China's Gross Domestic Product had grown at an average of 9.44% per annum between 1979 and 1994.[2] Figures for Shanghai are even more impressive - in the first half of 1995 the city's GDP grew by 13.3% over the same period in 1994, in the same period exports increased by 41.74%.[3] Occasionally, even official statistics indicate severe problems; a one paragraph-long article on page eight of the Beijing published China Daily Business Weekly announced that "[a]bout 2.5 million textile workers will have to be laid off and find jobs in other sectors."[4]

Inevitably I have incorporated a range of statistical data into this thesis. However, I consider that there are two crucial limitations to such bald statistics. Firstly, PRC statisticians and economic planners have continually faced profound problems in the collection of data. Those who provide the "raw" data have all manner of reasons to provide inaccurate figures, a situation the Chinese state now openly acknowledges. In the last seven months of 1994, a survey uncovered 70,000 fraudulent statistics, including the "blatant falsification" of 20,000 government reports.[5] Zhang Sai, Director of the State Statistical Bureau is reported to have said that figures reported, for example, of industrial

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[1]Figures cited in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Asia-Pacific (hereafter SWB), 17 July 1995, FE/2357/G/1.

[2]Ibid: G/2

[3]SWB Weekly Economic Report 19 July 1995, FEW/0393 WG/1.

[4]28 February-6 March 1993.

[5]Cited in "Lies, Damned Lies and Chinese Statistics" The Independent 18 July 1995: 10.

production, price rises, and population growth are all often inaccurate.[6] Secondly, statistical data, with its seductive averages and mind-bewildering millions and billions, tells us little or nothing about the situation of individuals' lives. Average figures can smooth over vast disparities - if one person's income rises by 1000%, how many people's may fall and still produce an average rise of 10%? Moreover, statistics provide little indication of the, often contradictory, perceptions, values and experiences of actual people. The great benefit of qualitative, ethnographic research is that it can provide much richer insights and more nuanced portrayals of lives as they are daily lived, experienced and reflected upon. My intention in this thesis is to provide an ethnographic study which highlights the increasing diversity, flux and uncertainty in urban China as experienced by a range of informants and commentators at the micro-level and thereby to contribute to a fuller understanding of trends and processes at work in a period of rapid socio-economic change.

This introduction is divided into six sections: the first situates my research with regard to regional and urban perspectives; the second outlines issues of access; the third explores epistemological issues associated with the status of anthropological "data" and the practice of ethnographic writing; the fourth introduces the sources of data and research strategies employed; the fifth sketches an overview of Shanghai's history; and the final section provides an outline of each chapter.

Regional and Urban Perspectives: Shanghai as a Locus of Study

Regional Perspective

Whatever is said of China...will probably be true only of some parts.
Rev. Hardy (John Chinaman at Home. 1907: 10)

This ethnographic account of Shanghai is firmly located within the regional specialization on the Chinese speaking world and, in particular, studies of the People's Republic of China. I have chosen this "local engagement" (Fardon 1990: 21) rather than concentrate upon a single theoretical issue for two prime reasons. Firstly, I wish to pursue an innovative and original approach which presents a broad brush ethnographic account of a metropolis which takes the city itself as the unit of study. Secondly, I consider that anthropological study demands a cross-disciplinary approach. By focusing upon a city which has been of albeit fluctuating global importance for many decades the sheer volume of relevant texts on Shanghai, let alone China generally, restricted the amount of time and

[6]Ibid.

thesis space available to refer to anthropological texts on other regions.

In this thesis I focus upon the distinctiveness of Shanghai as a city. Elizabeth Perry comments that "[w]hile the field of Chinese history...has been busy developing a nuanced picture of local diversity, the contemporary China field lags far behind in its understanding of geographical and structural variation" (1989: 583). Contemporary scholars of Chinese society generally refer, unambiguously, to "the Chinese" as a single, homogeneous, and undifferentiated group - an approach the PRC government would also favour.[7] I suggest that there are good reasons to dismantle this homogeneity. Typically, sinologists have highlighted diversity among China's ethnic minorities (e.g. Crossley 1990, Elliot 1990, Zhang & Wu 1987). However, among the majority Han Chinese population there are also many indications of cultural differences such as the extensive indigenous discourses which essentialize the character and nature of people from different parts of China (see Eberhard 1965) and the degree of linguistic diversity within China. In the case of Shanghai, for instance, the city's population is diaglossic. Whilst **putonghua** is the "dominant language" (Grillo 1989) Shanghai dialect is the language of "the street" and many homes.[8] Although considered a dialect, Shanghainese is more different from standard Chinese than is Spanish from Italian and a dialogue in the dialect would be largely incomprehensible to an ordinary resident from Beijing.

Perry observes that even when studies of contemporary China *have* focused on particular areas, the authors have usually presented their cases as representative of China as a whole, rather than highlighting local diversity. The historian Paul Cohen also remarks on the extent of regional and local variation in China and writes of the importance in investigations of "breaking the Chinese world down into smaller, more manageable spatial units" (1984: 161-2) so as "to gain a more differentiated, more contoured understanding of the whole" (Ibid). By focusing upon a particular city and its distinctiveness I hope to discern to what extent we ought to dissolve notions of "China" and "the Chinese" as overly-monolithic homogeneous categories.

Urban Context

Till recently anthropologists have often gone to great lengths to find remote

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[7]There is a similar trend in the study of Japan. Brian Moeran criticize's Benedict's generalizing about "the Japanese-all one hundred million of them", but adds "that this holistic approach is one that has frequently been favoured by the Japanese themselves" (1990: 342).

[8]Dictionaries of the Shanghai dialect include Creamer 1991, Min *et al* 1991, Pott 1924, Qian 1987, Silsby 1911.

locations for research. Even when they have come closer to "home", ethnographers of European societies tend to chose field sites as far removed as possible from urban centres. Malcolm Chapman writes that a map of Europe "with the size of its parts determined by the proportion of the collective anthropological brain that has been devoted to their study...would be grotesque indeed" (1982: 142). An ethnographic map of China would, most likely, produce a similarly misshapen depiction.

Since the 1960s anthropologists have begun to pay more attention to urban contexts although relatively little attention has been given to cities.[9] With a world-wide trend towards urbanization it would seem incumbent upon anthropologists to address and examine the diversity of the urban experience (cf. Harvey 1989). In seeking to understand the processes at work in the contemporary world it is vital to investigate urban life. With their concentration of people, goods, services, wealth, power, information and communications, cities are of particular interest. With their "critical mass" of population cities can support forms of knowledge which could not be supported elsewhere (Hannerz 1992: 202). As Hannerz points out, where "the cultures of small-scale societies are cultures of face-to-face, oral flows of meaning. The cultures of complex societies...now make use of writing, print, radio, telephones, telegraph, photography, film, disk and tape recording, television, video, and computers" (27).

Many anthropological studies on the PRC concentrate upon rural China (e.g. Chan *et al* 1992, Mosher 1983, Parish & Whyte 1978, Potter & Potter 1990). It seems particularly important to pay specific attention to urban China since in the view of one of the most experienced researchers of contemporary China: "In explaining contemporary patterns of social and cultural life in the PRC...rural versus urban appears to be the primary cleavage in China's contemporary social landscape" (Whyte 1993b: 358). If this is the case, and I believe this to be an accurate assessment, then the specificities of urban dwelling and city life demand the attention of anthropologists. This necessity has begun to be recognized and in an introductory chapter to a recent volume Urban Anthropology in China, Gregory Guldin comments that ethnographic research in urban China is now a "field in gestation" (1993: 5).

It seems particularly appropriate to conduct research in an urban context in the PRC since town and city dwelling are increasingly the experience of Chinese people themselves. Kirkby states that in 1980, the population of urban China was c.140 million

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[9]See Sanjek's (1990) review of urban anthropology in the 1980s.

(1985: 59) and accounted for c.15% of China's total population (202).[10] Estimates for the urban proportion of China's population in 1990 differ widely, from 26% to 56% (White 1994: 64).[11] Population statistics, like all statistics in China, must be treated with great caution. However, there can be little doubt that China has a rapidly urbanizing population. Kam Wing Chan, for instance, anticipates that in the coming two decades, the urban percentage of China's population will almost double (1994: 153).

In 1992, the population of Shanghai was 12,893,700 (White 1994: 68). Shanghai has a three-tier household registration system - with "city", "town" and "rural" zones. The city zone, with which I am most concerned, is divided into ten districts beneath which are neighbourhoods and street units. According to Huang Ju, Shanghai's Mayor, by the year 2010, the city will have an area of 6,300 square kilometres and a population of nineteen to twenty million.[12] Once again, these figures may not be wholly accurate but they do constitute official acknowledgement of the sharply rising trend of Shanghai's population. Moreover, at the same time as Shanghai is becoming (once again) a city to which migrants flow, so the city is exerting an increasingly powerful centrifugal influence both nationally and globally. It is notable that a recent BBC2 television series should focus upon Shanghai as one of the "cities of the future".[13]

The growing body of urban anthropological studies of China, as elsewhere, generally deals with discrete, small-scale units or defined segments of society. Examples of this include Walder's (1986) study on work units, Rofel's (1992) study in a silk factory, Henderson & Cohen's (1984) study of a hospital, Rai's (1991) study on university politics and Honig's researches on Subei people in Shanghai (1986, 1989a, 1989b, 1990, 1992). Studies on women are also popular (e.g. Croll 1983, Honig & Hershatter 1988, Stacey 1983, Wolf 1985). I have deviated in the direction of Hannerz's suggestion that urban anthropological analysis may take the city as a whole as the unit of focus instead of "rather limited assemblages of social relationships...lesser units within the city...in which the city itself recedes into the background" (1980: 296-7). This, then, is

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[10]Kojima gives a higher percentage 22-3% in 1982 and estimates that by 2000 urban dwellers will constitute over 40% of China's total population (1987: 24-5). White notes estimates for 1970 of 17% and 18% (1994: 64).

[11]Gittings claims that by 1986 the urban population had already reached 37.1% of China's total (1989: 4).

[12]"City of Future" SS 2 July 1993: 1.

[13]"Cities of the Future" BBC2, 29 November 1995.

ethnography *of* a city, not ethnography *in* a city.[14]

By focusing upon a single city my approach also differs from Parish and Whyte's Urban Life in Contemporary China (1984). This account remains the most comprehensive and systematic study of post-1949 urban China. The data in this study, based mainly upon interviews with refugees from the PRC in Hong Kong, relates primarily to the early and mid-1970s and it provides a useful background to more specific comments on Shanghai and as a point of comparison with contemporary developments. In a recent edited volume, Urban Spaces in Contemporary China (Davis *et al* 1995), Deborah Davis comments that in recent studies on China "no one focused on altered roles of cities or attempted an integrated study of urban life in the 1980s comparable to what Martin Whyte and William Parish did for the 1970s" (9). She suggests that "as the twentieth anniversary of Mao's death approaches, such broad overviews of the social consequences of the post-Mao reforms should begin" (Ibid). I have taken up this challenge for the city of Shanghai in the early 1990s.

I view the city as "the result of particular historical or contemporary economic, social, political, and cultural forces that form a unique urban context" (Eames & Goode 1977: 34). My concern is to examine and illustrate the distinctiveness of a particular city "stressing the differences in cultural traditions, resources, and historical processes" (Ibid: 35). One of the few attempts at an "inclusive ethnography" of a city is William Jankowiak's (1993) study of Huhhot in Inner Mongolia. Based upon research in the 1980s, Jankowiak adopts a symbolic interactionist approach. In my study of China's largest Han Chinese city I adopt similar research methods. However, unlike Jankowiak I not only build upwards from "street level" perspectives but also stress ways in which the quotidian lives of Shanghai citizens are co-implicated with wider historical, political and economic phenomena.

Shanghai As A Locus Of Study

[Shanghai is]...the chief seat of commerce, the home of progress, in short the nerve-centre of China, whose influence reaches out to the remotest corners of the land.

Mary Gamewell (1916: 19)

There are compelling reasons to study Shanghai. It is a city which "has had, and will have, a pivotal role in the evolution of modern China" (Howe 1981: ix). This claim is endorsed by Lucian Pye who writes that "serious analysis of nearly all important aspects

[14]A distinction drawn by Eames & Goode (1977: 30-35).

of life in China must, eventually, confront Shanghai and its special place in the Chinese scheme of things" (1981: xi). With the gathering pace of change in the fifteen years since this comment, and in view of Shanghai's renewed global attraction, study of the city is even more warranted. In addition to its intrinsic importance, 1990s Shanghai appears to be undergoing fundamental and rapid, even frantic, social change. It is a particularly timely point at which to conduct an ethnographic study of Shanghai.

Carrying out research in China's largest, most crowded and populous city involved particular problems which were very different to those in rural contexts. A brief contrast between urban and rural China may help to illustrate the kinds of differences involved for researchers. I make this comparison by referring to a village I visited in rural Anhui. The village had no road to it, no electricity or running water, and most of the population were illiterate. With a predominantly subsistence economy the villagers were largely dependent upon the seasons and the vagaries of nature. After two or three months in the village I would have been able to recognize and know by name most of the two hundred or so inhabitants. If I had lived with a local family I would immediately have been drawn into a web, a "close-knit" network (cf. Bott 1957: 59) of relationships. I travelled to the village from Shanghai and although I was seen as a foreigner, in local notions the "foreign world" (**waiguo**) seemed to be conceived of as a place simply somewhat beyond the already distant Shanghai. I was told that I was the first foreigner seen there in the sixty years since Japanese soldiers in the Anti-Japanese War. Friends, relatives and neighbours dropped in at will to the house of the family with which I stayed to examine this object of curiosity. One morning I awoke to find a group of people in my room - some squatting on the floor, one or two sat at the end of my bed - some chatting, others sitting quietly. At the risk of raising the ire of rural researchers, it seems that research in this context would have been so easy. Once I had come to grips with the local dialect, I need only lie on my bed and my research data would come to me!

As a researcher in the metropolis of Shanghai, unable to live with a family, unable even to live in accommodation where local people could visit, the problems I faced were of a quite different order. Far from being able to recognize every person, after having lived in Shanghai for three and a half years there were still many roads I had never visited and could not name. I had no natural network into which I could fit; everything depended upon contacts I could make and chance encounters. Shanghai is a large, complex metropolis. It is a highly literate society and a media-saturated environment where one must be cognizant, for instance, of "broadcasting's capture of time and space

in everyday life" (Moores 1985: 391). People's understandings of themselves and the world around them are influenced and informed by education, television, newspapers and films. Since these sources contribute to (and are constitutive of) people's cultural capital - their commonsensical notions and everyday discourses, it was important to make myself as familiar as possible with all these spheres. To partake of this diet - in its original sense of "way of life" - I also had to consume the latest television soap, keep abreast of political events and follow fashions in music and clothing.

Village, community type studies have tended to portray their object of study as bounded and, therefore, encompassable in an all-embracing ethnography. The practice of urban research has an alerting quality to this anthropological fiction. Faced with the complexity and diversity of Shanghai, I make no pretence of inclusivity or comprehensiveness. It is a paradox of the anthropological enterprise that ethnographic accounts often systematize research data that is partial, inconclusive and frequently contradictory. In Shanghai, this would make anthropology a strange bedfellow of a (another?) discourse of power, that of the party-state. The latter, in its official rhetoric, also abrogates to itself the ability to systematize experiences in Shanghai. At the same time, were I to present a thesis which fully conveyed the sheer unruliness and "incoherence" of the situation encountered "on the ground" it would, I fear, be unreadable. Inflicting an incoherent and unreadable tract on unsuspecting readers has little to recommend it. My approach, in the trade-off between verisimilitude and readability, is to investigate a series of themes of importance in contemporary Shanghai. Throughout my fieldwork I sought systematicities and I show evidence of tendencies and sociological patterns where this is warranted. However, in other instances, rather than impose alien theories and a non-existent systematicity upon my research data I have adopted a dialogic approach in which contradictions and inconsistencies remain.

The sheer size of the city in association with its crowded transport network presented problems. For example, if I met interesting people who lived on the other side of Shanghai to me, this involved a bicycle journey of three to four hours or a round bus trip of anything up to six or seven hours. Numerous telephone calls and occasional letter writing were two vital research tools in this urban context.[15] Another problem was local people's lack of time. Most people worked a six day week. Moreover, since my first stay

[15]I did not have a mobile phone or a pager. With hindsight I regard this as a missed opportunity. It would have been interesting to have had a mobile phone not only as a communications device but also to assess how its role in my presentation of self would have affected people's reactions to me.

in Shanghai from 1988 to 1990 many people had become busier, all around me there was evidence of increased business and "busy-ness". Friends who had then been in Chinese work units (**danwei**) and seemed able to take days off at will now worked for joint ventures with strict working hours or were undertaking a second or third job and/or evening classes. In addition, the colonization of leisure (Sahin & Robinson 1981) and of the night by television and pursuits such as karaoke singing provided people with alternative forms of entertainment than talking to a foreign researcher - although one informant did suggest that I interview him in a discotheque with one of the loudest sound systems in town!

Access

Anthropological research in a country with its door only half open to the Western world presents a range of problems and complexities which researchers such as Malinowski never had to contend with. Between 1949 and the early 1980s it was not generally possible to conduct long-term field research within the PRC. During these years anthropology was one of those disciplines which "languished" (Harding 1993a: 17).[16] For those interested in China the main alternatives were: i) research in another Chinese society such as Hong Kong (e.g. Baker 1968) and Taiwan (e.g. Harrell 1982, Wolf 1972); ii) to study China "at a distance" either through written materials (e.g. Croll 1981, White 1978) or interviews conducted in Hong Kong (e.g. Chan *et al* 1992, Parish & Whyte 1978, 1984). Each approach has its own advantages and disadvantages. For example, although refugee interviewing in Hong Kong has some advantages over research in the PRC, as one of its best exponents observes, in this type of interviewing it is particularly difficult to get a "rounded picture" of attitudes, values and emotions (Whyte 1983: 71).

Since the late 1970s new possibilities have emerged.[17] Those engaged in documentary research now have far more materials. For instance, Western researchers now have access to numerous public-opinion polls conducted in the PRC (see Rosen 1989) and there is a diversification and proliferation of literature and films (see Pickowicz 1989, 1995). In addition, "[s]ince the late 1970's, opportunities to conduct interviews and fieldwork within the People's Republic of China (PRC) have made it possible to explore

[16]The collected essays in Shambaugh (1993) - especially Gold (1993b), and Kallgren & Simon (1987) provide a comprehensive overview of the state of American studies of contemporary China.

[17]This includes the reemergence of indigenous anthropology. The first Chinese doctorate in anthropology was awarded in 1986 (Guldin 1994: 219).

aspects of popular thought...that were previously inaccessible" (Honig 1989a: 139). Despite this, China remains a country relatively under-studied by anthropologists which accentuates the originality and (I hope) significance of my street-level research.

In 1983, Anne Thurston wrote of "the strong constraints placed on contact between Chinese and foreigners and the suspicion with which foreigners continue to be viewed" (24). Norma Diamond records how during her 1979-80 research in Taitou "all the interviews were arranged for me by the brigade leadership who always had to be advised in advance about the topics to be covered in the interview. Moreover, interviews were not private" (1983: 125). Margery Wolf also recounts lack of privacy as one amongst many restrictions on her research in China in 1980-1 (1985: 28-55). In 1984, when I first visited Shanghai, a foreign presence aroused great interest. Even on Shanghai's main shopping street, Nanjing Road, any attempt at window shopping was soon curtailed by the staring crowds which surrounded a stationary foreigner within a couple of minutes. Later, as an ethnographic researcher, I was often conscious that I was being observed as much as observing.

Following the normalization of US-Chinese relations in 1979 Western research in China has been steadily increasing, albeit with the friction caused by the "Mosher affair".[18] Initially, exchanges "required the cooperation of official gatekeepers in China" (Madsen 1993a: 173). By the late 1980s, the exchange process had become much more "decentralized" (Ibid) and access "had become highly idiosyncratic and dependent on many factors, including personal and institutional *guanxi*" (Bullock 1993: 292), trends which parallel the more general decentralization and pluralizing tendencies in contemporary China. Equally indicative of recent trends is the way in which "[f]oreign students and scholars are increasingly viewed primarily as revenue opportunities" (Ibid: 297).

Despite the increased opportunities for access, especially since the mid-1980s, in 1992-4 there were still significant restrictions upon foreigners in China. Controls over where foreigners may live were particularly pertinent and hampering. Favoured options of anthropologists in other societies such as living in a local household or renting private accommodation were not permitted. Thurston suggests that "[u]rban-based researchers in China should consider the possibility of living in a campus dormitory or a small guest

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[18]In the early 1980s, the rural researcher Steven Mosher was accused of transgressing Chinese law and expelled from both China and his doctoral programme at Stanford. A four-year-long moratorium on rural fieldwork ensued (see Madsen 1987, Shambaugh 1993a: 6, 13 note 4).

house open to both Chinese and foreigners" (1983: 25). In Shanghai, I found that all smaller hotels had received instructions from the city government prohibiting them to accept foreigners (including "fellow country persons" such as Taiwanese) as guests. I was told that this was for the "safety" of foreigners. Thus the only practical alternative was the first of Thurston's options, living on campus.

Even at a university there were walls within walls. Foreign students were not permitted to live in the accommodation for Chinese students. Instead foreigners had to live in a building set aside for their use. The only Chinese people permitted to enter this segregated accommodation were teachers and students of the same university, and even these exceptions were only allowed access at certain hours of the day. Students had to show their student cards and register at the reception desk; teachers must show their work cards. In practice, these regulations applied only to Chinese citizens, for foreign guests could come and go at will. This could give rise to curious anomalies. For instance, on one occasion a Chinese friend resident in the UK planned to visit me. I asked the official in charge of the building if he would be allowed in and I was told that he would not. However, I also observed instances when local people were permitted to enter our building on production of a Chinese passport!

At various times foreign students protested at the visitors regulations. The official response was that these regulations were intended to preserve (**baohu**) the study environment and were for our safety. From informal conversations I gained the impression that preventing sexual relations between Chinese women and the large contingent of African students was also a consideration. Despite these restrictions the freedom granted to foreign students was greater than that allowed to Chinese students. For instance, the dormitories of Chinese university students were locked at 11pm and lights switched off at 11.30 - neither of which restrictions applied to foreign students. It seemed to me that the laxity of controls over foreign students paralleled the indulgence typically shown to small children in China. There was also a sense in which they paralleled the pre-1949 extra-territoriality which foreign residents in China claimed for themselves[19] I could not live with a family nor could I invite visitors but I was free to come and go at will. I could frequent the same shops, markets, cinemas, parks and restaurants as local people and take the same buses and walk and cycle along the same

[19]At times, the unwillingness of Chinese authorities to intervene in matters between foreigners had serious consequences. For instance, I was told of a case in a Beijing foreign students compound where an African student raped an Italian student. The Chinese authorities were extremely reluctant to become involved in this incident between foreigners and only expelled the man under pressure from foreign students.

streets. Above all, I could visit people's homes for daytime visits and, occasionally, stay overnight.

In view of my relatively free access to Shanghai citizens and the limited range and "depth" of official representations of the city and its people I have incorporated many local "voices" into my text. It is my hope to have produced a thesis which is informative, provides new perspectives, is evocative and conveys some sense of the dense texture of everyday life and the thoughts and feelings of people in Shanghai. In a state where "neither outright collective defiance nor rebellion is likely or possible" I was able to observe many instances of what James Scott describes as "weapons of the weak" (1990: 27). In Shanghai people say that "the higher authorities have a policy, those below have a counter strategy" (**shangmian you zhengce, xiamian you duice**). I present many examples of such "everyday forms of resistance" as ridicule, truculence, irony, petty acts of non-compliance, foot dragging, dissimulation and "disbelief in elite homilies" (Scott 1990: 350). Also of particular interest are those instances where local people took "imposed knowledge and symbolisms" and "made something else out of them... [and] subverted them from within" (Certeau 1984: 32).

Epistemological Concerns

Sunday afternoon, looking through the old man's family photograph album - a record of places visited, relatives and friends - I wondered at the random gaps and torn fragments. He told me that various prints had been ripped out at random by the Red Guards who had searched his flat. These young students, more than fifty years his junior, had also confiscated all of his twenty diaries spanning six decades. Months later some of the photographs were returned, along with two diaries - another survived at a relative's home in America.

Before outlining how data was gathered it is important to deal with the epistemological issue: what is the status of the knowledge in this account? I am keen to avoid the two overlapping criticisms of ethnographic accounts which Richard Fardon distinguishes as: the "critique of representation from power" and the "literary critique" (1990: 6-8). The former relates to the inequality of political and economic relations which "were the conditions for others to be construed in specific terms and as particular types of objects of knowledge" (6). The latter refers to textual features such as the seeming objectivity and absence of the first person (cf. Clifford & Marcus 1986).

Much has been written on the implication of anthropology in unequal power relationships. Writers such as Asad (1973), Said (1978) and Inden (1990) have criticized the way in which representations of others by Western Orientalists are implicated in

unequal power relationships. Such notions appear to consign anthropologists to an immutable place within a predetermined (and determining) nexus of power relations. Even were this to be the case, and I find such a stance overly simplistic, my own experience as a foreigner in China over the course of ten years suggests subtle yet significant changes.

During 1992-4 I became increasingly aware of a distinct difference compared to my first stay in Shanghai from 1988-90. At this earlier time, I had been aware, often uncomfortably so, of an unequal economic power relationship. It was automatically assumed that *all* foreigners were rich and this assumption coloured interpersonal relationships between foreigners and Chinese infusing them with an unequal quality. Few local citizens had the self confidence to treat a foreigner on a basis of equality. By 1992-4 this sense of inferiority (**zibeigan**) was far less apparent. With the rapid emergence of *nouveaux riches* in Shanghai the simple "foreigner = wealth assumption" was now only one equation of a far more disparate and confused range of possibilities. In encounters with local people I was aware of this change, and several informants also remarked upon it. Abu-Lughod writes that ethnography "is inevitably a language of power" (1991: 150). As a research student, dependent upon the good will and help of Shanghai residents whose social and cultural (and often economic) "capital" was greater than mine I certainly did not feel myself to be in a position of power. I was, moreover, well aware that the Chinese authorities could, potentially, revoke my visa at any time.

For several decades anthropologists employed the nineteenth century natural science paradigm in which the scholar presupposes that his (*sic*) knowledge uses the highest form of reason and the epistemology used "assumes that true knowledge merely represents or mirrors...the separate reality which the knower transcends" (Inden 1990: 15). An interesting variation on this is Rev. Doolittle's (1868) Social Life of the Chinese which he subtitled "A Daguerreotype of Daily Life in China". Similarly, Arthur Smith (1892: 10-11) described his impressions in Chinese Characteristics as like "photographic negatives". Despite criticism of positivism, the epistemology used by Western social scientists often appears little changed. Graham, for example, accepts Said's basic thesis and comments that after Said "we can never be quite sure that our understanding of China is not tainted" (1983: 42). However, this still leaves us in the paradigm of a natural science of society. It remains the approach of scientific realism which "says that the entities, states and processes described by correct theories really do exist" (Hacking 1983: 21). Even though nineteenth century approaches to the depiction of other societies have

been criticized, the assumption is that some new model of society can be produced which *will* enable us to represent the "reality" of other societies in a manner somehow untouched by the human mind.

I fully accept that the "knowledge of the knower is not a disinterested mental representation of an external, natural reality. It is a construct that is always situated in a world apprehended through specific knowledges and motivated by practices in it" (Inden 1990: 33). In the case of China, historians and geographers (e.g. Appleton 1951, Dawson 1967, Mackerras 1989, March 1974) have shown how representations of China by Western writers have changed over the years in response to shifting cultural trends within Europe. The tainted/untainted dichotomy becomes meaningless when one recognizes that the conditions under which knowledge is gathered constitutes an inextricable part of that knowledge. It is, therefore, important to situate the conditions under which the data for this thesis was gathered and to provide an account of "that human experience which is field work" (Berreman 1962: xviii). Throughout this thesis I have sought to remind the reader that both my informants and myself were "social being[s] actively emplaced in space *and* time in an explicitly historical *and* geographical contextualization" (Soja 1989: 11).

I am aware of criticism that such "self-conscious attention to the circumstances of fieldwork" may "open the possibility of yet more labyrinthine strategies for the creation of authority" (Fardon 1990: 12-3). Similarly, my decision to include diverse local "voices" may be construed as "orchestrated textual authority" (Ibid: 12) and as a post structuralist device in which the ethnographer becomes "the agent who enables people in other cultures to speak and...in a sense to exist" (Hobart 1990: 309).

Clearly these are criticisms which strike at the very roots of ethnography. In part my rejoinder is that the responsibility for the finished work must, ultimately, be that of the ethnographer. Moreover, it is my hope that by deliberately avoiding the urge to over-systematize and by presenting divergent views that the ethnography in this thesis remains particularly open to multiple "readings".

It seems to me that a fundamental dilemma lies in the disjunction between anthropological research and ethnographic writing. As Hobart notes "we simply *cannot* represent things as they are, rather we represent something as something else...to an audience on a particular occasion" (1990: 309). No matter how much an ethnographer aims for "thick description" (Geertz 1973: 27) a process of selection is inevitable since "society and culture consists of endless *discursive* possibilities" (Parkin 1987: 66).

Selectivity occurs at many levels. In an interview situation, for instance, note-taking is always partial with limitations of both time and linguistic competence. A comparison between verbatim notes and conversations tape-recorded and transcribed in "full" (in so far as this is possible) highlights the extent of grammatical errors, repetition and redundancy in many verbal encounters. Moreover, in the abstraction from human interaction of written notes there is a tremendous attrition of the meanings conveyed via the forms of non-verbal communication which saturate such encounters. This situation may be especially relevant in a society with China's political landscape where "[i]n place of explicit verbal conversation, officially proscribed interpretations may rely heavily on gesture, facial expression, tone of voice...[and] an elaborate mixture of innuendo, metaphor, and allegory" (Madsen 1993b: 193-4). Madsen may be right when he argues that "anthropologists are the outsiders best able to enter such worlds of hidden (*sic*) interpretation" (194). However, a truly "thick description" would need to contain all this and more, something beyond the format of a written account. Moreover, I would argue against the presumption that there is ever complete comprehension in human communication, by either native or non-native listeners.

Field notes written-up from memory are more selective still, with problems both of forgetting and an irresistible drive to systematize and make comprehensible random comments. In addition, much of my data relied upon verbal accounts which were themselves re-presentations and re-membered "fragments of the fragments of what was initially on view" (Lowenthal 1985: 204). Moreover, "[a]ll memory transmutes experience, distils the past rather than simply reflecting it" (Ibid). Eye witness accounts are refracted through re-learning including social and peer group pressures, media accounts and so forth - there is an ongoing intertextuality. Even the vocabulary people use to describe events often matches that used by other people and in media representations. I would argue that not only is the present interpreted in the light of past experiences but past experiences are also reinterpreted in response to encounters with the contemporary.

At this point I refer the reader to the description, provided above, of that peaceful Sunday afternoon in Shanghai. Months later, recalling the scene, I discerned an analogy between the elderly man's photograph album and diaries, and my manufacture of this ethnography. My representations of Shanghai are also images out of place, dislocated, fragmented, disjointed, sifted, re-ordered reconstructions with sometimes unaccountable sudden gaps. As Clifford Geertz has it, "[t]here is no general story to be told, no synoptic picture to be had... What we can construct, if we keep notes and survive, are hindsight

accounts of the connectedness of things that seem to have happened: pieced-together patternings, after the fact" (1995: 2).

Bearing these thoughts in mind I regard this project in terms of a metaphor supplied by a retired worker in Shanghai. After an evening spent discussing his life experiences he showed me out. As we descended the uneven, narrow, unlit wooden staircase he commented that he felt it had been "just like telling a story" (**xiang jiang gushi yiyang** - cf. Geertz's description of anthropological writings as "fictions" 1973: 15). The data we use constitutes "our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (Ibid: 9). What follows, then, are the stories people told me about themselves and their city.

David Parkin's suggestion of impressionism as a metaphor for the anthropological project seems particularly apposite, implying as it does "variations on a theme" (1987: 64). There is the possibility "of a potentially endless creation of complementary perspectives" (65). I hope to have produced such an ethnography by following a series of different themes in each chapter. As the author of this text I have sought to tread a line between editorial dictatorship and drift and cacophony. In Shanghai, I heard many contradictory views. A refrain echoed by one of my most insightful informants, focused on how complicated (**fuza**) Shanghai was becoming and his inability to understand current socio-economic trends. Rather than gloss over discrepancies and incoherencies or pretend to a panoptican-like overview I have attempted to retain a sense of flux and indeterminacy in my text, whilst, at the same time, providing a clear, readable account.

As early as 1962, Berreman noted the differential effects of his association with different assistants and the way that each determined the kinds of data to which he was able to gain access. In stressing that ethnographic research is an ongoing, dialectical process, it is important to state that the accounts I was given were affected by many context-dependent factors. These include my gender, age and relationship to the person (as a friend, student, teacher, researcher etc). My status as a (British) foreigner invariably affected informants' perceptions of what I should, could or ought to be told or would want to hear. Infinitely subtle factors such as emotional and physical states, time of day, and location all affected encounters. I find particularly useful Ien Ang's portrayal of the researcher as "someone whose job is to produce historically and culturally specific knowledges that are the result of equally specific discursive encounters between researcher and informants in which the subjectivity of the researcher is not separated from the 'object' s/he is studying" (1989: 105). Thus it is incumbent on me to provide some senses

of the "encounters" involved. The account in this thesis, therefore, comprises "tableaus, anecdotes, parables, tales: mini-narratives with the narrator in them" (Geertz 1995: 65).

Research of this kind is learning "how to be a person" (**zenme zuoren**), a key Chinese conceptualization, in a different cultural environment. My interactions with local people and language learning exerted subtle and often imperceptible influences on my thinking and character (**qianyi mohua**). I was, and still am, involved in a constant process of learning and reflexivity in which "previous knowledge is continually being reworked in the light of experience" (Hobart 1987: 44). The new expression heard one day became the basis for the next day's interview. One is always building on what one has just learnt and the same held true for "informants", one's co-discussants. Presumably, all human life is constantly like this, but it may be that the interrelated projects of anthropological research and language learning make one particulary conscious of this process, and it is a process which should be written *into*, rather than *out of*, my account.

My attempts to study Shanghai dialect with a private teacher illustrate the agentive role an anthropologist can play whether wittingly or unwittingly. As we progressed he told me that he was discovering ever more vocabulary items and realizing that Shanghai dialect is very "colourful" (**secai**) and "rich" (**fengfu**). After several weeks he confided that he had originally considered the dialect as only involving pronunciation differences from **putonghua** and had anticipated that these could easily be taught within five or six weeks. Now, however, he realized that there was far more to it than this and that "when one speaks it all the day one pays no attention and does not realise this." He became increasingly aware of and to relish the distinctiveness of the dialect. In this interaction, at the same time as I was learning, I was also being instrumental in altering my teacher's perceptions and understanding of the language he spoke everyday. In facilitating this shift of his non-discursive knowledge to the realm of discursive awareness, it could even be that I was helping to foster his (new) sense of Shanghainese identity.

Sources of Data - Research Strategies and Tactics

Hannerz writes that "[p]erhaps urban life, by its very nature, implies a demand for an even higher degree of...methodological flexibility on the part of the researcher" (1980: 310). A strategic feature of my research was to accumulate and utilize data derived from an eclectic array of research gathering techniques and strategies. The voices of local people, noted from diverse contexts ranging from structured, tape-recorded interviews to chance overheard remarks, are the main category of research data utilized in this thesis.

However, being cognizant of the "mediazation of modern culture" (Thompson 1990: 3), I also collected items in published and other media such as television, films, **huajixi** (comic dramas) and **xiangsheng** (comic dialogues) - the latter two being popular forms of local entertainment which use the Shanghai dialect. The official media can be taken as a good source of representations of how things should be, such media are intended to have a propaganda function. Hu Yaobang wrote that "journalism should make itself a successful mouthpiece of the party" (1986: 182). An editorial in **Renmin Ribao** of July 1, 1990 made clear the current policy: "Mass media must adhere to the principle of the Party spirit, and be politically identified with the Party Central Committee" (cited in Li 1991: 354-5). The Party produces and sanctions media items which they intend viewers to "read" in one way. However, I often found that actual viewers sometimes made interpretations which did not accord with the Party's. Some local people were ironic readers of such messages - as one man told me "when you see the television news, the reality is the opposite of what is actually said."

In the early 1980s, Margery Wolf found that many people either consciously, or often unconsciously, responded to questions using current political slogans. She adds that respondents were distinctly uneasy about revealing their personal views but that nonetheless often they "casually" revealed instances which were quite contrary to the official line (1985: 32). I encountered far fewer instances of this "official speak". In part this was due to my much more relaxed and "natural" research context. In addition, this relaxation was indicative of the proliferation of, and new diversity in, the Chinese media since the late 1970s which has been "significantly expanding the volume, variety and reach of cultural services" (Fitzgerald 1984: 114).[20] I would draw particular attention to the importance of local television. During the 1980s urban Chinese joined the world's television viewers and the potential "audience" in China now exceeds 650 million people.[21] By 1986, television penetration in Shanghai had reached 95% (Lull & Sun 1988: 197). Watching television has become the most popular leisure time activity and it "diffuses its messages into the culture in a way that has no parallel" (Lull 1990: 145). Moreover, it "has influenced the audience's thinking on topics that range from sports and consumer activities to the most profound political, economic, and cultural issues" (Lull

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[20]See, for instance, Bishop 1989, Chang 1989, Evans 1989, Kraus 1995, Landsberger 1985/6, Pickowicz 1995, Womack 1986.

[21]Useful references on television in China include Bishop 1989 Ch. 7, Chang 1989 Ch. 6 & 8, Dunnett 1990 Ch. 9, Howkins 1982 Ch. 3, Lull & Sun 1988, Li 1991, Lull 1991.

1991: 172-3). Observing what the local population are regularly observing must be a part of the contemporary anthropologist's research. Media representations constitute valuable ethnographic data in their own right.[22] They were also useful as a basis for formulating hypotheses and addressing issues less amenable to more direct questioning.

Interviews, Observation and Interaction in Everyday Situations

Robert Weller writes of the PRC that "[r]arely has any state developed such powerful institutions to impose and foster unified interpretations" (1994: 188). Thus there is a countervalent value to be derived from qualitative research in China. Research on unofficial viewpoints using documentary sources (e.g. Arkush 1989, Link 1984, 1989) tends to be based upon speculation and the imputation of indigenous viewers' responses *by* the researcher. Interviews and conversations with local people of differing generations and backgrounds were my most valuable source of material. They yielded insights into many activities which, as an outsider or through lack of opportunity, I could not participate in or observe at first hand. Interviews provided access not only to respondents' conscious opinions and statements but also to the linguistic terms and categories through which they constructed their worlds and their own understanding of their activities (Morley 1989: 25). A tentative finding is that the institutions Weller refers to are now far less powerful than he suggests, and that unofficial viewpoints are now more readily held, and certainly more readily voiced.

Interviews were of differing degrees of formality, ranging from encounters in officials' offices to friendly chats in people's homes. For the most part, interviews were semi-structured, that is, I would begin with a set of prepared questions but follow up lines of enquiry as alluded to or hinted at by "informants". My concern was that informants should not just follow an agenda and answer a list of questions which were based solely upon my presuppositions. Rather, I sought to ask open-ended questions which would allow respondents the opportunity to set the agenda and me to be sensitive to *their* concerns and interests in my supplementary questions. Some interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed later. In most instances I took notes at the time and supplemented them from memory later. Only on one occasion did a respondent ask me not to record his words, saying that it would make him "nervous".

Shanghai homes are crowded and in a typical interview situation several people would be in the same room. An advantage of this was that often "[a] performance for the

[22]See, for example Fiske 1987, Fiske & Hartley 1978, Williams 1990.

ethnographer would be abandoned as tension, conviviality, concentration on a topic of conversation, or some other intensification occurred among the participants" (Berreman 1962: l). To provide a flavour of the conditions under which data was often gathered I reproduce here notes on the difficulties of note-taking in such a situation made after one such occasion: 1) people speak faster than I can write; 2) one respondent spoke **putonghua** with a heavy Pudong accent; 3) xxx speaks **putonghua** very badly; 4) often one person is talking and somebody else interrupts them in mid-sentence; 5) two or three people may talk simultaneously; 6) the television is on at the same time;[23] 7) children talk to me or other people at any time; 8) people come in and out of the room; 9) conversations switch back and forth from the variations of **putonghua** and Shanghai dialect; 10) people use expressions I do not understand.

Despite the difficulties in note-taking in such circumstances, it also meant that I was often in situations where my "foreignness" would be forgotten or, at least, recede into the background. My presence could bec me peripheral, even irrelevant, and people engaged in the same activities and conversations as if I were not there. In these "home encounters" I was a participant observer/listener/talker in "real situations" which lacked the artificiality of many more formal one-to-one interviews. I would stress again Shanghai's crowded situation - privacy, being apart from other people, is not the norm.

As other researchers (e.g. Honig 1989a: 139), I found that "unobtrusive methods" (Dahlgren 1988: 293-7) such as conversations, chats on buses and at parties, interaction in and observation of everyday situations provided significant research data. At times this was similar to the type of "guerilla interviewing" engaged in by Tom Gold (1989), which he describes as "unchaperoned, spontaneous but structured participant observation and interviews as opportunities present themselves" in which notes are written up afterwards (180). Snatches of overheard conversations in buses or elsewhere also provided insights and useful material. It was, for instance, whilst cycling and travelling by bus in Shanghai that I first became aware of the depth of feeling against migrant workers in Shanghai. Local residents, my fellow commuters, often vocalized their disdain for the "outsiders" who, as they saw it, crowded the buses and clogged-up the streets.

It was my intention to meet local people from as many different backgrounds as

[23]During an interview with five people in the room (home to three of them), at one point when I was speaking to an interviewee, one person was listening to the radio, another watching television, and third was using the telephone!

possible. Inevitably, certain categories of person figured more prominently in my research. The two main biases in this respect are the age and educational level of my informants. People I spoke most with were younger people in their twenties or early thirties and retired people. The former group I had the most access to since I had been based at a university in 1988-90 and was again during 1992-4. They were also my "natural" peer group. The second group, of elderly people, were those with the most free time to speak to me. The bias for those with higher education can be accounted for partly by my university location. Moreover, there is, I suggest, a tendency for Western researchers to associate with local intelligentsia - both habitually theorize sociological phenomena.

Often reactions to the ethnographer reveal cultural biases. Local people I encountered held a notion of research strikingly similar to that of nineteenth century European positivism. It was seen to involve the collection of facts - history books, for instance, were said to consist of facts. Even though I would explain that I was interested in ordinary people's understandings, informants often prefaced their comments by saying "what we say is not necessarily correct." This self-denigration of agency and expertise is, in itself, significant. I often had the sense that people considered correct knowledge as a discrete, unambiguous category. It is interesting to speculate how far such notions derive from several decades of compulsory Marxism. Associated with this was the notion of the containerization or departmentalization of knowledge. In situations where one person had a higher education than others, this person would typically be "designated" to speak to me as a cultural "expert" who could represent (in dual senses) them.

A particularly interesting aspect of the way informants often represented their views was the use of the term **laobaixing**. When I asked people about events in Shanghai they often spoke about "the **laobaixing**" (the common people, the ordinary people - literally "the old one hundred names"). The **laobaixing** often appeared to be reified as an essentialized patient or victim (less often as an agent). At times it was evident that informants were verbalising their own feelings or experiences in terms of "the **laobaixing**" although this distinction was not always clear. To retain this ambiguity and to highlight the frequency of deployment of this term I retain the Chinese usage throughout. I posed the question, "Who are the **laobaixing**?" to various people. A standard response was that **laobaixing** includes everybody apart from high officials. A man in his sixties pointed out that "during the Cultural Revolution the **laobaixing** were called 'the masses' (**qunzhong**)". With the recent stress upon material incentives and consumerism old terms may be re-

cycled and re-invested with meanings. The response of an engineer in his twenties was illustrative of this, for he described the **laobaixing** as "those who use their own ability (**ziji de benshi**) and blood and sweat (**xuehan**) to make money" whilst non-**laobaixing** are "those who use power to make money."

Making Contact

*Foreigners don't know the truth [of matters in China]. We Chinese (a la zong ku nin, **women zhongguoren**), including professors, have all been fooled (**shangdang**). After forty years in this environment [i.e. post 1949 China], I understand a little (**wo you yidian mingbai**), but there is still much that I don't understand. So how can a foreigner who knows little Chinese and stays here for only a short period of time know very much? It's easy to cheat foreigners.*

Informant's comment

A local sociologist remarked to me that it is very difficult for both Chinese and foreigners to conduct research in China because "there are many walls and curtains." The ways in which I was able to meet people and the kinds of networks I used to negotiate these boundaries are indicative of the nature of human relations in Chinese society. It is important to note some of the particular problems and also the advantages faced by researchers and especially a foreign ("outside country person") researcher in China.

"*Na ku nin, na ku nin*" - the dialect term for "foreigner" (**waiguoren**) is invariably the first word of Shanghai dialect an overseas visitor learns in the city. When a *flaneur* in the city, I often heard this term used in the gossip around me. Parents would point me out to their children, and young children would tug at their parents, point, and tell them "*na ku nin, na ku nin*". This was not only a linguistic initiation but also an introduction to a different cultural environment. It revealed a key organizing factor in Chinese society - **nei-wai you bie** - the distinction made between inside and outside.[24] In this instance, the distinction was between "inside country" (**guonei**) and "outside country" (**guowai** or **waiguo**). This distinction is drawn so clearly that I could never become "Chinese" but must learn how to be a "foreigner" in Shanghai. The inside/outside dichotomy permeates Chinese society - at its most intimate level is the family (**women ziji ren** - our own people) and everybody else. During Mao Zedong's time a crucial distinction was between "the people" and "enemies of the people". This dichotomy can also drawn between Communist Party and non-Party members, an increasingly hazy distinction - especially at the level of ordinary Party members - but still important nonetheless. It can also be Shanghainese (*a la Sang he nin*/**women Shanghairen**) in contrast to non-Shanghainese

[24]See Yang 1989a: 40-1, also chapters 2 and 3 below.

(*na di nin*/**waidiren** - "outside land people").

At least two important considerations may lead Chinese people to be particularly circumspect in interactions with foreigners: fear and nationalism. Each makes people especially reluctant to mention shortcomings of Chinese society. Until at least the mid-1970s - many informants said the early/mid 1980s - it was dangerous to have contact with foreigners. A visit by a foreigner would be followed by a visit from the police. The less politically charged atmosphere in contemporary Shanghai allowed for a much more relaxed and spontaneous interchange between foreigners and Chinese. However, legacies of the fear and caution instilled in the past remained, especially amongst older people. A particular worry was that a foreigner may publish items when they return home which would place them in danger. One informant represented the prevalent view that "it is no longer frightening to meet a foreigner, but it can still bring trouble. If one does not know somebody, why look for trouble?"

A second important consideration involves nationalistic feelings, what local people described as "national face". For instance, one friend told me "if a foreigner asks me about Beijing getting the Olympics I will say that it should. If another Chinese person asks me, I will say it shouldn't." When I inquired into the reason for this discrepancy I was told "it's because of face (**mianzi**)." People may consider pointing out China's shortcomings as **jia chou bu ke wai yang** - domestic shame which should not be made public. This may be related to a general distaste for foreigners who smear (**chouhua**) China. A combination of face and fear meant that I had particular problems in trying to meet workers who had been laid off (**xiagang**). One contact who knew several **xiagang** workers none of whom were willing to speak to me, explained that "they are very angry. They have nothing good to say about this society and are afraid of getting into trouble if they speak to you."

People I encountered not only had their own ideas about what foreigners should not be told but also differing ideas about what they could understand. In conversations and interviews which touched upon diverse aspects of Chinese society I was frequently told "you foreigners cannot understand" (**nimen waiguoren bu neng lijie**). Using the notion of ethnography as a performance, it often seemed that there was a construction of the audience - in this instance foreigners/myself - as a paedocracy (Hartley 1987). That is, many informants believed that Chinese society is inherently too complex for foreigners to understand - a notion which serves as a kind of boundary maintenance device. I vividly recall an interview with a university lecturer who knew that I had studied Chinese

for several years, lived in Shanghai for almost three years, and was a research student studying contemporary China. At one point in our conversation he asked me whether I had heard of Mao Zedong!

It will, however, be evident from the comment on the Olympics that I was not solely related to as a foreigner.[25] At times, my knowledge of Chinese language, Shanghai dialect and local customs enabled me to straddle the shifting insider-outsider boundary. This cultural capital made me an outsider with inside knowledge. People would describe me as "half Chinese", "like a Shanghainese" or "almost Chinese". A popular Chinese song points out, Chinese people have "black hair, black eyes and yellow skin".[26] With my brown hair, blue eyes and white skin, no amount of cultural capital (or a Chinese passport for that matter) would be sufficient to make me fully "Chinese".

Chinese society is highly stratified. It was noticeable in local television news reports that when people were interviewed the caption beneath them usually described only their appropriate categorical status such as "customer", "neighbour" or "factory manager" rather than their given name. In the same way as Chinese surnames precede given names so introductions of people commence with their appropriate social status and then their personal name. As an "outsider" I needed to negotiate various inside/outside parameters and had to "fit somewhere into the known social system" (Berreman 1962: xxi). When introduced it was important that I be assigned to a meaningful category, whether it be "schoolmate/teacher/friend of xxx, "student studying abroad (**liuxuesheng**)" or "student of London University". At times even "my friend from England" was sufficient. In each instance, the ascribed title would precede my name.

The contact mentioned above who knew several **xiagang** workers added that if there is a basis of trust (**xinren**) and if people felt I was concerned (**guanxin**) about China they would talk openly. Before detailing bases of trust, it is appropriate to note some of the advantages of being a foreigner in China. A foreigner is likely to be outside a person's regular circle of acquaintances - it may be "safer" to speak to an outsider.[27] One respondent told me that in certain respects he felt less of a demarcation line (**jiexian**) with foreigners than with other Chinese. In particular, he referred to social and political

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[25]People would often discuss "foreigners" - including "English people" - in my presence, imputing to them ways of behaving, characteristics or world views they knew I did not possess. These disjunctures rarely seemed to impinge upon the stereotypes.

[26]On the "discourse of race" in China generally see Frank Dikötter (1992).

[27]In rural research the degree of 'encapsulation' would probably be much greater.

ideas which Chinese friends may consider "unbearably (**jieshoubuliao**) extreme" and could only be mentioned to very close friends. Examples of this included the notion that China should give Tibet and Xinjiang independence and that Zhou Enlai - still a popular "hero" - was as much to blame for the Cultural Revolution as Mao Zedong. As a foreigner, I could be told since I had no preformed "barrier" against such ideas.

Foreigners in China are often described as "foreign friends" and treated as "exalted guests" (Butler 1983: 119). In many interactions I was treated with more politeness and received more cooperation as a Westerner than a Chinese stranger would. As a Chinese speaker, I tended to lose the category of "guest" and some of the politeness due to this category of person. At times, when I was with Chinese friends and a need arose to approach an official they would suggest that it would be most efficacious if I made a request for help. Often, too, they would suggest that it would be best if I use English on such occasions, prestige appeared to be attached to *not* being able to speak Chinese. Finally, one academic felt Chinese people should tell foreigners as much as possible about China and "especially the life and thoughts of the **laobaixing** ('common people')." It was my impression that he regarded it as a moral imperative to tell foreigners what China is "really like" and not leave them reliant upon official representations which he regarded as partial and inaccurate.

In Exploring the City, Ulf Hannerz (1980: 192) remarks that contact-making in many non-Western cities is much more personalized than in contemporary Western cities. He adds that "in some societies there is a widespread agreement that to accomplish things you need particularistic linkages" (Ibid). These insights accord with the situation in China where there are highly elaborated indigenous notions of networking and people have a high degree of "network awareness" (Ibid: 196). In her research into **guanxi** ("relationships") Mayfair Yang relied heavily upon a string of dyadic relationships (**guanxi**) to make contact with people (1986: 93-4). Similarly, Helen Siu reports that she depended upon "an informal network" (1983: 150). In a similar fashion I built upon contacts I had made during my stay in Shanghai from 1988-90. I also adopted the "rolling approach" used by Frank Pieke in Beijing (1991a, 1991b). Pieke describes how he successfully built up a network "by asking informants to introduce me to a friend who might be willing to talk to me" (1991a: 8). I did make some contacts via chance encounters but most were made via intermediaries. Contacts made during my two years residence in Shanghai from 1988-90 were extremely useful. This prior residence, alongside short visits to the city in 1984 and 1985, also gave me some familiarity with the

city and a basis on which to assess the comments informants made on the processes underway in the city.

Important bases of trust are those of **tong** or sameness such as classmate, relatives, work colleagues and teacher-student (see chapter 4). Friendship is important but is usually based upon one of the latter relationships. In establishing a basis of trust it was important to create friendly relations (**jiaoqing**). Becoming a "friend" is a vital element for successful research in China (Thurston 1983: 26-8). This is a relationship built upon trust in which "the human element--intangible factors of personality, adaptability, geniality, sensitivity, and decorum" all play an important part (Ibid: 26).

The relationship of **tongxue** was especially valuable in my research. As a student I made contact with fellow students (**tongxue**) and teachers. On one occasion I was introduced by a fellow student's wife to four university classmates whom she described as **shuren** (friends). One of them subsequently told me that if I had been introduced to her in any other context she would not have been prepared to speak to me. As she expressed it, I was "dependent upon the face" of our mutual friend (**kan xxx de mianzi**). I could also be introduced to colleagues, relatives and other current or former students of my own teachers. The teacher-student relationship was also fruitful. As an occasional teacher of English I made contact with students who would introduce me to their friends and relatives as their "teacher".

A distinct disadvantage of conducting research in a society where particularistic values dominate is that without personal contacts it can be extremely difficult to penetrate "circles" of relationships. An advantage of such a society is that once accepted by one link in an interpersonal circle of trust one often gains access to a much wider number of people than would be the case in England. People will help others on the strength of sometimes very tenuous links. For instance, a former middle school classmate of a friend introduced me to his sister's husband. In instances where one "depends upon the face" of a mutual acquaintance contacts could be built upon in ways which would be unusual in England. My networking - described by one informant as a "chain reaction" (**liansuo fanying**) - stretched across a gamut of different bases of trust which may cross back and forth across the generations. As an example, I once met the parents of a Chinese classmate. The father subsequently introduced me to a work colleague who felt indebted to him for having helped him secure his present job. The work colleague then introduced me to a colleague from his previous job and to a schoolmate of his son. Via this schoolmate I met his girlfriend and another schoolmate...

An important part of "networking" in China is reciprocity, although the nature and degree of conscious calculation involved in particular interactions is difficult to gauge. Providing help (**bangmang**) is a prime means for creating a basis of trust. In the initial stages of some interactions the reciprocal exchange of name cards forms a part of the etiquette of introducing oneself. Dining is an important part of human relations, often considered vital in creating and maintaining connections. For example, if I invited somebody for a restaurant meal this was generally followed by an invitation to a meal at their home. When invited in this way, I followed local politeness and took a small gift, often of fruit.

Relations can also be built upon a basis of common interest - a **li-hai** relationship. I engaged or became embroiled in such relations to a limited extent. Offset against my wish to acquire information could be the following: a chance to practise English and acquire information about the West; the notion that "one more friend is one more 'path'"; the possibility of future material advantages, for example, a belief that one day I may be employed in a position of influence (in the diplomatic service and able to issue UK visas was one suggestion!); a degree of prestige derived from association with foreigners - for instance, my visit to a newly established private school was felt to be good publicity.

An interview with a local government official provides a good instance of the differential information obtained once a basis of trust has been created. In interactions with officials one is especially likely to encounter "officialese" (**guanhua**) where the most interesting aspects are often those which remain unsaid. On this occasion a young man introduced me to his father, a worker in a trade union who had recently applied to join the Communist Party. He explained that his prime motivation was to improve his career prospects but swiftly added that during the course of his application he would, of course, convey an impression of pure altruism. To demonstrate his facility in providing what would be required, he proceeded to recite paragraphs of the prevailing dogma. If, as a stranger, I had met this man in his official capacity I would undoubtedly have heard only the latter official-speak.

During conversations, especially with people I did not know very well, it was important to create bridgeheads of contact, common points which could be understood. These included information about myself or England which evoked in people a sense of common feeling or experience and a shared idiom for communication. In other instances "television talk" acted as a "social facilitator" which enabled me both to establish common ground with local people and to address issues which may be awkward to approach by

more direct questioning (Lull 1990: 35-44).

Language facility played a vital part in attempting to bridge the "inside-outside" distinction. Use of standard Chinese, which I had previously studied for three years full-time and two years on a part-time basis, was essential. Beyond this, my attempts to study and use the distinctive Shanghai dialect were helpful in creating closer relationships. Finally, in one instance, I was introduced to a man of about seventy by a former schoolmate. He recalled that he first met an English person in 1936, when a business colleague of his father came to his house. I was the second English person to visit his home and he said that he felt a close connection to England because of this. I sensed that his kindness to me was imbued with the sense of affection (**qing**) he felt for his old school friend, his home, his father, even a generalized nostalgia for his childhood.

More generally, my being an "English person" constituted an important part of local people's perceptions of me. I heard a stock range of descriptions of "English people" repeated to me on hundreds of occasions. For instance, I would be told that England had been a great power but was now in decline. It remains a country ruled by a Queen and aristocrats and, until recently, by the much admired Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Its people were honest and deeply conservative and its capital city, my home town, perennially sunk in a "nether sky of fog" (Dickens 1971 [1853]: 49). The way in which people related to me on a daily basis was undoubtedly influenced by such stereotypes and consequent expectations. The import of this for the data I gathered is, I believe, impossible to unravel. Suffice to say that in some way it and my own presentations of self in daily encounters must surely suffuse this thesis.

Historical Background to Shanghai[28]

This outline is intended to provide background information on Shanghai and to highlight aspects of historical and contemporary significance. These aspects include Shanghai's: "forgotten" pre-Opium War history as an entrepôt; post-Opium War development as a cosmopolitan, semi-colonial city and a major industrial, financial, cultural and political centre; distinctive organizational structure under Communist Party rule; limited post-Mao reforms; and rapid socio-economic changes initiated during the

[28]This section draws upon Bergère 1989, Chinese Repository (hereafter CR), Cameron 1970, Ch'en 1979, Clifford 1991, Johnson 1995, Davidson-Houston 1962, De Jesus 1909, Honig 1986, 1992, Howe 1981, Johnson 1993, Lanning & Couling 1921, Maclellan 1889, Murphey 1953, 1974, Perry 1994, Pott 1928, Sutherland 1984, Wakeman & Yeh 1992, Wasserstrom 1991, White 1978, 1981, 1994, White & Cheng 1993.

1990s and especially since 1992.

Pre-Colonial Shanghai

At a conference in Shanghai, a paper by one Shanghai academic commenced an examination of the city's importance with the words: "Over 150 years since the founding of Shanghai in the middle of the 19th century..." (Xu 1993: 3). However, there has been a town on the site of contemporary Shanghai for over 2,200 years. By the thirteenth century the city was a regional trade centre. It declined during the Ming dynasty but revived in the Qing. It was given its present name in AD 1280. A city wall - three and three quarter miles long and 18-20 feet high - was built in 1554 as protection against Japanese pirates. The first documented European contact appears to have been in the sixteenth century when the missionary Matteo Ricci stayed there. De Jesus (1909: xxviii) estimates that the population was 528,000 in 1812.[29] In the early 1830s foreign visitors described Shanghai as a prosperous trading city with its port handling a volume of shipping equal to or exceeding that of London (Murphey 1974: 40).

Substantial British trade with China began in the early eighteenth century. For over eighty years, from 1760, European residence was restricted to a 24 acre site in Canton with trade conducted under stringent regulations applied by the Chinese authorities. In 1832 a Mr Lindsay was sent from Canton to Shanghai to request that the city be opened up to foreign trade. He was unsuccessful in this but sent the East India Company a report with "glowing impressions of Shanghai's wealth and prospects" (De Jesus: 1-9).

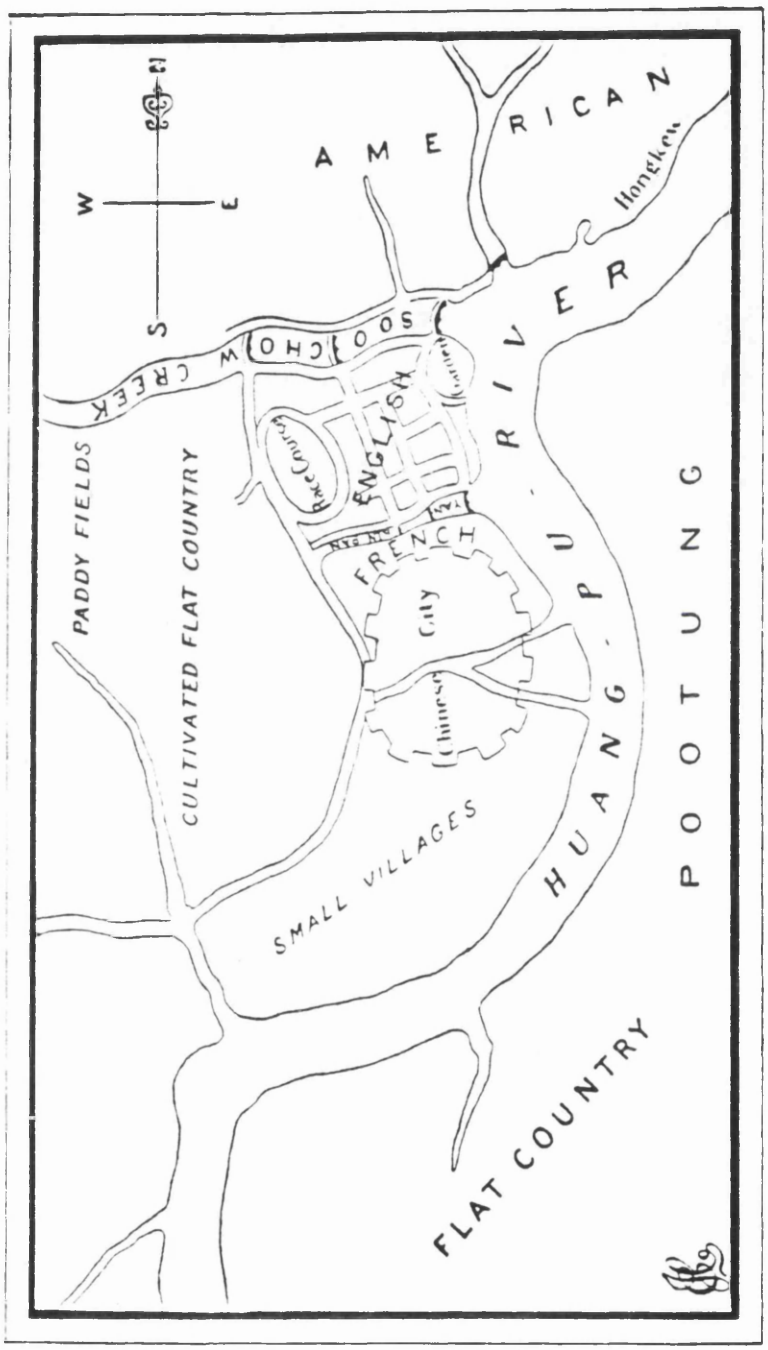
In June 1842, during the Opium War, Shanghai was occupied by British troops. Under the Treaty of Nanking, signed on 29 August 1842, the city was one of five treaty ports opened to British residence and trade (the other four were Canton, Amoy, Fuzhou and Ningbo, with Hong Kong also ceded to Britain). Under the Treaty, British citizens were given rights of extraterritoriality, a privilege ultimately granted to the citizens of some seventeen countries. A visitor to Shanghai in 1843 described it as a "mercantile emporium" with trade between ports within China and also international trade with, for example, Manilla, Siam, Malacca, and Bali (CR 1846 15(9): 466-9). Lt. Forbes, who was with the British force which captured Shanghai, provides a glowing account of the city

[29]Population figures for this period vary dramatically: Lieutenant-General Sir Hugh Gough who led the 1842 attack on Shanghai estimated a population of 60,000-70,000 (CR 1843 12(7): 344); Fortune estimates 270,000 in 1843 (1853: I, 91); and an article in the CR suggests 300,000 in 1843 (1846 15(9): 467).

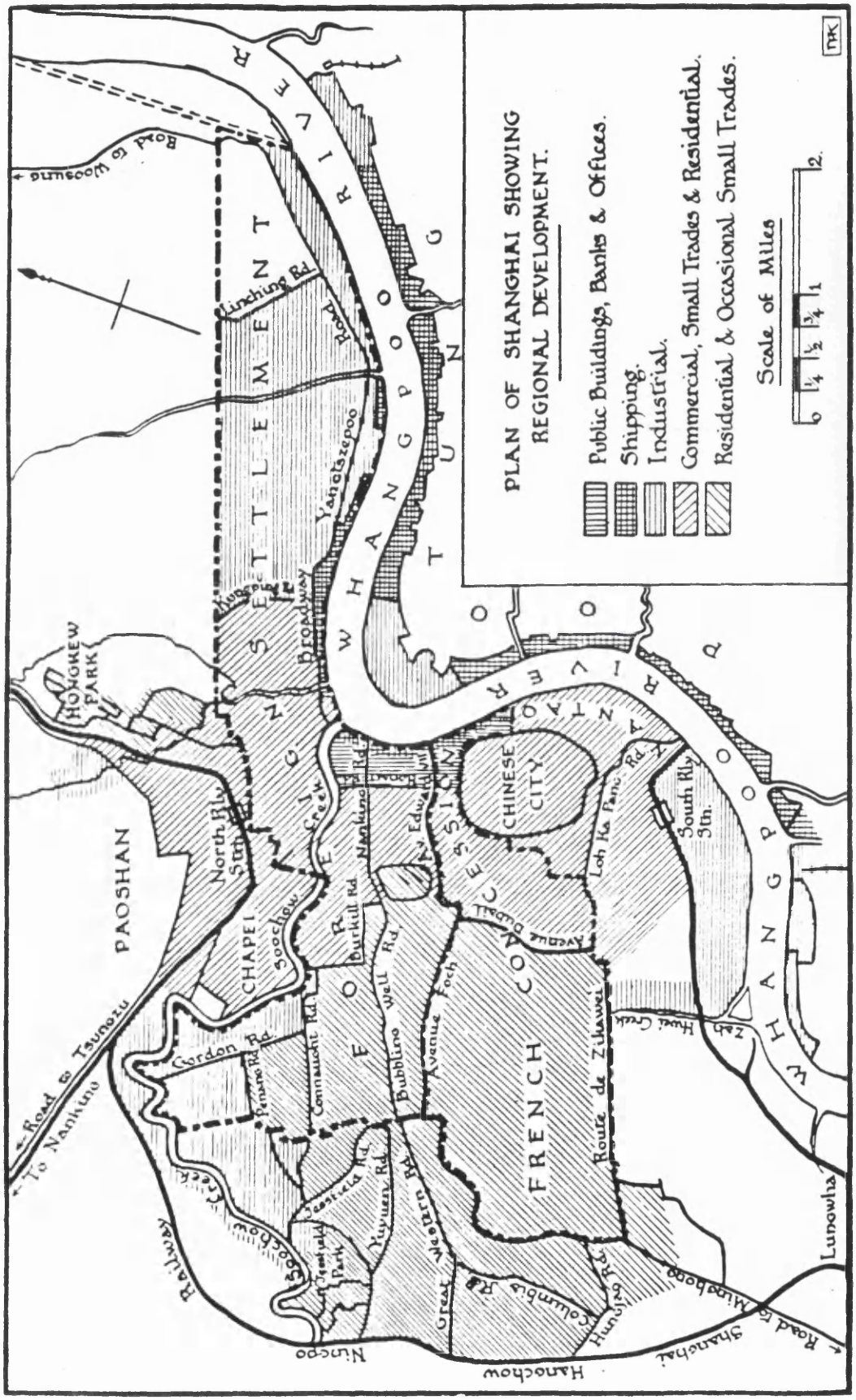
within its walls, its "very large suburbs" and "extensive trade" (1848: 10-54). He also described the expanse of country around Shanghai, "its rich cultivation, and numerous canals, teeming with wealth, beauty, and ague" (15).

Map 1. The Main Treaty Ports of China
Source - E.R. Hughes The Invasion of China By The Western World. London: Adam & Charles Black. (1937: 3)

Map 2. Late Nineteenth Century Sketch Map of Shanghai
Source - C.J.H. Halcombe The Mystic Flowery Land London: Luzac & Co (1896: 9)



Map 3. Plan Showing Development of Shanghai by 1940
Source - F.C Jones Shanghai and Tientsin OUP. (1940).



Semi-Colonial Shanghai

By the late 1840s "an out-line European town" had begun to emerge on the Concession site (CR 1847 16(8): 406). In 1849 the French and in 1854 the Americans were granted land. The British and American zones amalgamated in 1863 to form the International Settlement. Shanghai rapidly grew from a "prosperous domestic port into one of the truly great cities of the world" (Perry 1993: 115). The foreign community set up their own Municipal Council in 1854, although White describes the ensuing fifty year period in Shanghai as one of "maximum modernization with minimum administration" (1981: 31). By 1919, Shanghai had become the major industrial, commercial, and financial centre of China and was one of the five or six largest cities in the world.

Writers such as Said (1978) and Inden (1990) have highlighted regularities in Western representations of so-called "Oriental" peoples. Post-Opium War British representations of China can be firmly placed within the wider discourse of Orientalism. China was portrayed as a country frozen in time, isolated from the beneficent influences of the West, its population in a somnambulant torpor. Once Shanghai came under the aegis of British domination it was readily absorbed into this Orientalist discourse. Writers such as A.E. Moule describe "the former isolation of Shanghai" and comment that Shanghai was "formerly somewhat obscure, difficult of access, and unimportant" (1911: 213). A common assertion is that Shanghai's development was "all due to European initiative" (Bigham 1901: 103) and "a splendid example of what British energy, wealth, and organizing power can do " (Bishop 1899: 24). Shanghai's success is attributed to "the public spirit", "honesty of purpose", "power of brain", "tact and indomitable will" (4) of its foreign residents who overcame "the difficulties which faced them on all sides" including the "visible inertia of the native character" (4). Contrasts were increasingly drawn between the native walled city and the foreign settlement - sometimes referred to as the "model settlement" (cf. Dyce 1906).[30] The foreign concession was described as "an object-lesson of modern civilization among the benighted millions of China" (De Jesus 1909: i). In a more recent work, David-Houston dedicates his history of Shanghai, Yellow Creek, to "The men from the West who Built Asia's Greatest City" (1962). He comments that by 1870, "in the face of sullen obstruction from the Chinese authorities, Shanghai had emerged from the slime, and was already, in terms of trade, the fifth port in the world"

[30]For comparisons of the Settlement and the Chinese city, see, for instance, CR 1847 16(11): 542-65, Bigham 1901: 103-4, Bishop 1899: 24-26, Cumming 1886: 3-7, Darwent 1904: 106-21 and Wilson 1887: 20-5.

(91).

By the 1920s and 1930s Shanghai had become one of the most "modern" cities in Asia with major trading companies, factories, universities, department stores, modern public utilities and banks. The city developed an extensive "civil society" composed of both non-governmental private economic activities and "political society". These included an extensive range of both Chinese and foreign corporate groups, voluntary associations, newspapers and publishing houses. Shanghai was the leading cultural centre in China. China's film industry began in the city and in 1906 the first cinema was opened. Writers such as Xu Zhimo, Mao Dun and Lu Xun all gravitated to Shanghai. During the 1930s there was a flourishing school of literature (**haipai wenxue**) in Shanghai.

Shanghai became an important point of cultural contact with numerous foreign companies, schools and universities (e.g. St. John's University set up in 1879), missions, publishing houses, bars, shops, intellectual and political movements. Western thought had considerable impact both through its direct agents such as missionaries and educators and also more diffuse cultural influences such as Western literature and films - by 1935, 18 of Shanghai's 37 cinemas showed only foreign films (Ch'en 1979: 220).

Many Western observers saw Shanghai as increasingly part of the "modern" world (e.g. Hughes 1937: 268-74, Lang 1946: 93, 99, 120). Hughes described Chinese families in Shanghai as "increasingly cut off from their ancestral village" and notes how the middle classes "have through education, come to a modern rationalist position, and see the ideals of old China as a lost cause" (268). With approval, he noted that "Miss Shanghai" now wears short skirts, has permed hair and participates in "sex romance" (269-71). Gaulton also describes emulation of the West. He writes that "Shanghai's middle and upper classes cultivated a distinctively Europeanized cultural style" (1981: 40).

Alongside commerce and industry, diverse underworld activities flourished in the city. Overseas visitors described it as the "Sodom of China" (Gamewell 1916: 172) or "the Paris of the China" a city where "many young men [were] ruined by its attractions" (Hardy 1907: 70). With a predominantly migrant population and three separate policing authorities Shanghai became the centre of organized crime in China (see Martin 1992). In Perry's estimation gangsters were "the effective rulers of early twentieth century Shanghai" (1993: 89). Prostitution was recognized as a major problem. One estimate puts the number of prostitutes in Shanghai in 1935 at 100,000, making it "the largest single employer of female labor" (Hershatter 1992: 145).

In the West it often seems that the abiding resonances of pre-1949 Shanghai are

of sing-song houses, gambling, prostitution, opium dens and kidnapping. This is the Shanghai of novels such as Shanghai: City For Sale (Hauser 1940) and Shanghai. Paradise of Adventurers (Miller 1937). Miller wrote (critically) that "Shanghai laughs, drinks and...loves outrageously, impudently" (1937: 22). Such images persist in post-1949 studies. For instance, Murphey writes that "[m]orality was irrelevant or meaningless in Shanghai" (1953: 9). In her semi-fictionalized account Gangsters in Paradise (1984) Pan Ling mentions the "showiness of Shanghai" (4), that it was "an outlaws dream" (12), the "opium emporium of China" (28) and "a city that catered to all sexual tastes" (13).

As China's largest and most dynamic city and with relative freedom of expression Shanghai was home for many Chinese radical movements. Often these were inspired by nationalism such as the Chinese Communist Party founded in the city's French Concession in 1921. The city was the site of many demonstrations against colonial rule (see Wasserstrom 1991). In addition, in the period between 1919-49, Shanghai had "one of the most aggressive labor movements in world history" with strikes and labour disputes reaching a peak in 1926-7, 1946 and in late 1949 (Perry 1994: 1, see also 1993).

On March 25, 1927 the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek entered Shanghai. On April 12 he launched an attack on CCP members and supporters with the intention of eradicating Communist influence in the city. This aim was largely achieved and the CCP was forced to seek a rural power base. Chiang had "grandiose plans to turn Shanghai into a modern urban settlement" and aimed to make it a fully "modern" metropolis (Wasserstrom 1991: 151). However, civil war and war against the Japanese meant that such plans made little progress and were, effectively, shelved until resuscitated in the 1990s. In 1932 there was Sino-Japanese conflict in and around Shanghai. At the start of the 1937-45 Anti-Japanese War, in October 1937, Shanghai's Zhabei district was practically destroyed by Japanese bombers. The International Settlement was overwhelmed by Japanese forces following the attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941.

In 1945, the Nationalist government regained control of Shanghai. Wasserstrom comments that in 1945, the KMT were "greeted warmly" but that by 1949 they "had squandered this initial goodwill" (1991: 155). The period from 1945-9 has gone down in Shanghai history as marked by inflation, official corruption and civil strife. However, Shanghai's new government in 1949 came not as a result of these pressures but as the result of battles fought elsewhere. On May 25, with scarcely a shot fired, Shanghai fell to a largely peasant army.

Shanghai Under Mao

Shanghai presented the victorious CCP with some extremely difficult problems. As a semi-colonial, cosmopolitan city it represented a threat (also an affront) to the new government but it also contained a substantial proportion of the nation's productive capacity and skilled work force. After the purge of 1927 the CCP even lacked effective propagandists who spoke the dialect to help consolidate its power in the city (Gaulton 1981: 50).

The new authorities established (or revived) highly effective means of organizational control and surveillance. The Cultural Revolution/Maoist model of urbanization is noted by Parish and Whyte as having the following distinctive structural features (358):

1. Strict migration controls and minimal urbanization.
2. A penetrating residential work unit organizational system.
3. A highly developed bureaucratic allocation system.
4. An emphasis on production rather than consumption.
5. A relatively egalitarian distribution system.
6. A rejection of schools as a basic mechanism for sorting talent.
7. Much stress on citizen involvement in public health, social control etc.
8. Rigid taboos on all forms of dress, expression, ritual life, and communication that does not conform to the official ideology.

These structural features had distinctive social consequences, most notably a high stability in jobs and residence, minimal differentiation of consumption patterns and life styles, extreme bureaucratization and the creation of a sharp urban-rural divide. This pattern made the cities of that period distinct from the past in China and from urban areas elsewhere. It is also important to note the extent to which policies in urban and rural China diverged and "two distinctive organizational and economic forms were established" (Whyte 1993b: 359).

Between Autumn 1950 and December 1957, the proportion of Shanghai's industrial workers employed in privately owned factories was reduced from 75% to zero (Perry 1994: 7-8). By 1951 almost all foreigners had left and foreign and Chinese capitalist enterprises were gradually taken over, a process completed by the 1956 nationalizations. Workers were employed in state or collective work units called **danwei**.

From the early 1950s until the late 1970s citizens were divided into four discrete

classes - workers, peasants, the military and intellectuals (**gong, nong, bing, xue**). The degree to which individuals' lives were encapsulated within bureaucratically organized and policed structures during the Maoist era severely limited the extent of "civil society" which "operates according to a logic and an organizational structure that is different from that of the centralized state and its administrative, military and legal arms" (Yang 1989b: 35). Organizational changes were backed up by the Party's moves "to introduce and popularize a set of symbols, including a new political vocabulary, which it expected the people to use to structure their response" (Gaulton 1981: 48).

In 1949, Shanghai suffered a loss of capital and expertise to Hong Kong. Between 1949-79 the status of the city was undermined through various measures including: i) government policies designed to reverse the concentration of the nation's productive capacity in coastal cities and to relocate the economic "centre of gravity" to inland provinces; ii) the centralization of political power in Beijing; iii) the government's policy of autarky; iv) China's diplomatic isolation vis-à-vis the West and relative closure to foreign trade; and v) the lack of significant investment in Shanghai. Until the 1980s, the main exceptions to this policy were the founding of the vast Jinshan Oil and Chemical and Baoshan Steel Plants both founded in suburban Shanghai in the 1970s. In addition, considerable quantities of the city's resources both in terms of material resources and skilled manpower were transferred from Shanghai. Between 1950-83, Shanghai gave 86.8% of its tax revenues to the central government and retained just 13.2% (Jacobs & Hong 1994: 231). Despite this, there was still significant economic growth in the city and it remained China's pre-eminent industrial centre.

Post-Mao Shanghai[31]

In 1979 the CCP Vice-Chairman Ye Jianying announced that the "basic goal of revolution is to liberate and develop the social productive forces" (cited in Tsou 1983: 69). Rather than the former emphasis on class struggle, egalitarianism and autarky the Chinese government began to stress the "Four Modernisations" (in industry, agriculture, defence, and science and technology) - a policy first proposed by Premier Zhou Enlai in January 1975. These were to be achieved by reforms such as allowing some people and places to get rich first and the "Open Door" to Western capital and technology.

Initially, most reforms were instituted in the countryside. In 1987 Gordon White wrote that policy and institutional changes implemented in rural areas since 1978 were

[31]A general overview of the period 1979-89 is presented in Saich (1992).

"transforming fundamentally the character of rural society" (264). At this time there had been only relatively modest changes in urban China, such as the re-legalization of small-scale private enterprises.

The state began to implement a more concerted range of urban reforms from the mid-1980s. However, the scope, scale and impact of these reforms was still quite limited. In this respect they accorded with the prescripts of Chen Yun, a long-standing member of the CCP Politburo and a Vice-Premier of the State Council. In the early 1980s, Chen "declared that the relationship between the planned economy and the...market was like a bird and a cage. The plan was the cage and the bird the market. If the cage was too small, the bird would suffocate. If there was no cage, the bird would fly away" (Bachman 1985: 152). Thus the urban reforms constituted a tinkering at the margins of the socialist state planned economy. There was no fundamental economic restructuring but, rather, new forms and types of employment were grafted onto the existing system. In Shanghai, these reforms had a gradual and piecemeal effect.

Despite the limited extent of urban reforms, by the mid-1980s there was already evidence of prosperity in Chinese cities, especially those on the eastern seaboard which, it seemed, were "fast becoming depoliticised, modernized and westernized" (Chan 1989: 67). Between 1980-87 industrial growth averaged 10% per annum and between 1978-87 the average urban resident's real income doubled.[32] A World Bank (1990: 129) report estimated average per capita incomes for different provinces in 1986: Shanghai was highest of all at 3,471¥, next was Beijing with 2,130¥, the national average was 746¥, and Anhui just 599¥.

By 1988 inflation became a serious problem for the first time since before the Communist takeover and this was a prime underlying cause of the demonstrations which erupted in many Chinese cities in Spring 1989. In Shanghai, as in most Chinese cities, there were large-scale demonstrations with overt demands for greater democracy and an end to corruption by officials. After its clampdown on demonstrators in Beijing on June 4, the party-state sought to reassert its authority across China through the use of terror and an intensive propaganda campaign. At the same time, attempts were made to slacken the pace of economic reform and many of my informants described the period between mid-1989 and 1991 as one of stagnation.

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[32]Kirkby writes that after two decades of deteriorating urban conditions, urban housing has been the "single greatest beneficiary" in the post-1978 re-allocation of state resources (1985: 170).

Shanghai In The Nineties

Today, under Deng Xiaoping's reforms, the city [Shanghai] is once again trying to draw foreigners and their enterprise, once again dreaming of becoming one of the great international centers of the world.

Nicholas Clifford (1991: 38)

I was resident in Shanghai in the year after June 4, and the atmosphere often felt very depressing. When I next returned to Shanghai in Summer 1992, I expected there to have been little change in this gloomy scenario. It therefore came as a surprise to find a quite different atmosphere and to discover that a main topic of conversation was stocks and shares!

From 1990 the central government had begun to promote Shanghai and Pudong. But the main changes took place after Deng Xiaoping's now famous January 1992, Spring Festival, "inspection tour of the south" which included stops in Shenzhen and Shanghai. A handful of brief comments Deng was reported to have made on this tour translated into dramatic shifts in policy and the morale of many Shanghainese citizens. Throughout my research period in Shanghai, the slogan **gaige kaifang** ("reform and the Open Door"), the dominant paradigm for China's social and economic policies, was endlessly repeated in the city's media.

In measures announced in March 1992, Shanghai Municipality was given more authority to make decisions regarding investment approval. In addition, the central government granted permission to issue stocks and shares and to permit trading in Shanghai of stocks issued elsewhere in China. Foreign stores were allowed in Pudong and income taxes on Shanghai enterprises lowered from 55% to 33% (Jacobs & Hong 1994: 234). In addition to these preferential policies "the centre...[gave] Shanghai an explicit regional leadership role" (Ibid: 239) as the "Dragon Head" of the entire Yangzi River Valley. Two major suspension bridges have been built to link Pudong with central Shanghai and much foreign and domestic capital has flowed into Shanghai. At a national level, the new policy direction was underlined in late 1992 at the 14th Communist Party Conference with its call for the development of a "socialist market economy".

On January 1, 1993 Pudong New District (**Pudong xinqu**) was established. This has a population of 1,380,000 and an area of 518 km^2 - about five-sixths the size of Singapore (Ibid: 235-6). A recent paper stressed that a key objective for Shanghai by 2010 is to "[c]reate a modern city of the first order in world terms" (Zhao 1993: 2). This agenda appears, belatedly, to bear out Pye's anticipation that with the "Four Modernizations" policy Shanghai would "again assert itself as the country's most advanced

and dynamic city" (1981: xv).

In three years, 1991-4, Shanghai's GDP grew by approximately 15% per annum.[33] In 1993, 3,650 foreign investments were approved for Shanghai totalling US $7 billion.[34] Living standards for many Shanghainese have risen and this has fostered a consumer boom. In the first six months of 1993, retail sales were 24% higher than the same period in 1992 (Ho & Leigh 1994: 22). Shanghai's sociological "landscape" is being radically altered by the newly adopted economic policies and the trends associated with them. There has already been a reversal or dilution to varying degrees of Parish and Whyte's eight distinctive structural features of Maoist cities outlined above. The radical transformations which Gordon White described as having taken place in rural China in the early 1980s are now being matched by equally fundamental changes in urban China. The "more complex, ambiguous, competitive and potentially conflictual rural process" White (1987: 250) discerned now has its parallel in urban China.

Since June 1989 the party-state has successfully controlled public displays of dissent in urban China. However, the reforms are allowing an increasing diversity of ways of life and categories of people who increasingly operate in a realm beyond (though constrained by) that controlled by the state. The new "space" between the government and the populace has allowed a relative pluralization and blurring of social categories and representations. In this thesis I investigate these changes and the new diversity, flux, contradictions and ambiguities which I found in China's largest metropolis.

Overview of the Thesis

To an extent the themes I pursued and the questions I asked people were strongly influenced by the tenor of conversations and responses during the initial stages of my fieldwork and not solely based upon preconceived foci built up through previous residence and reading. I consider this type of reflexive and flexible approach implicit in the very nature of long-term anthropological fieldwork.

My first chapter examines changes taking place in Shanghai by tracing a range of indigenous metaphors which residents use to express, and in part, constitute them. The themes which are addressed in the following chapters all stem from concerns and topics outlined in this first chapter. The second and third chapters are drawn along a spatial

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[33] FT Survey - China 7 November 1994: V.

[34] Ibid.

dimension: the second focuses upon the consequences for identities of Shanghai's increased permeability to global and intra-national flows; the third focuses upon the way places and spaces within the city itself are differentially marked and trends which are affecting work places and home "styles". In chapter four I examine personal relationships. Local people frequently assert the centrality of "human relations" (**renqing**) and "connections" (**guanxi**) to their everyday lives. Given the state's involvement in attempting to change human behaviour this is a significant topic.

The two remaining chapters examine topics which were of particular moment and especially obtrusive as phenomenon during my research period in Shanghai. The state's legitimacy (especially after June 4, 1989) - military power aside - resides largely in its ability to bring economic improvements for the majority of citizens. In 1990s Shanghai, the rise of popular consumerism and the rapid emergence of a share market were topics of definite importance. In view of informants frequent discussion of them and their obvious and far-reaching effects upon the fabric of the city both of these topics demand attention. Additionally, these are fascinating topics for academic study since they both appear to constitute developments in Chinese society which are radically opposed to policies pursued during the Maoist period. Each of these themes also highlights the new dimensions of choice and uncertainty in the lives of many Shanghainese.

Chapter five investigates changing patterns and representations of consumerism and consumption, themes which are constitutive of and central to an understanding of the socio-economic changes which are underway in contemporary Shanghai. Chapter six focuses upon the social impact of the introduction and rapid growth of the recently reopened share market, one of the "crazes" (**re**) in 1990s Shanghai which touched and influenced the lives of millions. In this chapter, as in others, I explore ways in which the social contours of Shanghai are changing and provide new perspectives on an Asian metropolis in flux.

Chapter 1 Opening the Door, Crossing the Stream: Representations and Metaphors of Reform in Contemporary Shanghai

The dregs of the old civilization are like the sand and mud accumulated in the Yellow River; they have built up in the blood vessels of our people. We need a great tidal wave to flush them away. This great tidal wave has already arrived. It is industrial civilization. It is summoning us!

Commentary from **Heshang** television documentary (Su & Wang 1991: 116)[1]

Our coastal areas, silent for centuries, this Gold Coast of the Chinese people, with an appetite long held in check, are now the first to rush towards the Pacific. The Chinese people at this moment are more eager than ever before to enter the world market. And yet this people has been isolated for too long and is still unfamiliar with the [uncharted] seas of the commodity economy.

Ibid: 173

*In 1984 I came to Guangdong. At that time the rural reforms had been underway for several years, the urban reforms had just begun, and the first steps had been taken in the 'special economic zones'. Eight years have since passed. On this visit I find that Shenzhen and Zhuhai 'special economic zones' and several other places have developed extremely rapidly, and much more rapidly than I had expected. After seeing this, my confidence has increased. Revolution is the liberation of productive forces; reform is also the liberation of productive forces... Unless we maintain socialism, unless we institute reform and the Open Door (**gaige kaifang**), unless we develop the economy, and unless we improve the lives of the people, we will be headed up a blind alley (**silu yi tiao** - literally a "dead road")...*

*Why has our country been able to be so stable since 'June 4'? It is because we have carried out reform and the Open Door policy, promoted economic development, and lives of the people have been improved... Have greater courage in reform and the Open Door, dare to experiment, and do not be like a woman with bound feet... If great strides are not taken in reform and the Open Door, if we lack courage to be path-breakers (**chuang**), it is because we fear that there are too many capitalist things, that it is taking the capitalist road. On the crucial question of whether something is called 'capitalism' or 'socialism', the main criteria for making this judgement should be whether it is of benefit to developing the productive capacity of socialist society, whether it is helpful with regard to increasing the sum total of a socialist state's national strength, and whether it is beneficial with regard to increasing the people's living standards...*

Taking the socialist road, is none other than step by step bringing about common prosperity. The proposed blueprint for common prosperity is that: those areas with the conditions can develop first, other areas will develop more slowly. The areas which develop first will spur on the less advanced areas, and ultimately all will achieve common prosperity. If the rich become richer, and the poor poorer, a polarization will be created, but the socialist system should and, furthermore, is able to avoid this polarization...

Now, several nearby countries and regions' economies are developing faster than ours. If we do not develop, or develop too slowly, as soon as the common people compare [China's economy with those of these other regions] there will be problems... The opportunity of the moment must be seized, now there is a good opportunity. I am worried that this opportunity will be lost. If it is not seized, the opportunity before us will

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[1]The controversial six part documentary series, **Heshang** ("River Elegy"), was transmitted in China in 1988. Many of its makers were criticized in the aftermath of June 4, 1989.

disappear, in an instant the time will have passed by... Shanghai now definitely has the conditions to go faster [in development]... Looking back, my one great mistake was not to include Shanghai when we set up the four 'special economic zones'.

Deng Xiaoping[2]

Shanghai of the future must be a metropolis equal to New York or London, said Mayor Huang Ju as he outlined revisions to the city's development plan designed to create an 'oriental Manhattan'... He was addressing the City Planning Meeting, the third since 1949...marking the city government's efforts to revive the past glories of Shanghai and make the city an international metropolis in the 21st century.

"City of Future" Shanghai Star 2 July 1993 front page

My main interest in this chapter is to explore the changes (or lack of change) local residents I encountered described as having taken place in Shanghai city during the post-Mao era. A phrase which dominates official rhetoric in 1990s Shanghai is **gaige kaifang** ("reform" and the "Open Door"). These are the policies designed to make China a "modernized" (**xiandaihua**) nation and Shanghai a thriving international commercial and financial centre. I therefore undertake this investigation by concentrating upon this phrase and the discourses which surround it. In particular, I highlight the sustained and systematic metaphors which saturate these representations and pursue my investigation by following some of the trails of these indigenous terms. In the first section of this chapter I examine ways in which the term **gaige kaifang** was understood and, after a theoretical discussion on the role of metaphor, draw attention to the key "watery" and socio-spatial metaphors of which the "Open Door" is itself an example.

One informant's memorable description of **gaige kaifang** was to liken it to the opening of a sluice gate (**dakai shuizha**), adding that "like when a sluice is opened, a great wave bursts forth." Following this metaphor and that of the "Open Door" involves an investigation of representations of when, why and by whom this sluice or door was opened, what "flow" this has permitted and with what consequences. I investigate the first set of these questions in the second section. Informants often characterized everyday life in pre-reform Shanghai as presenting few "roads" or opportunities - the city had become stuck in a rut. Many local people depict policies pursued under the current official version of "the socialist road" as radically different from those of the Maoist era. I explore portrayals of this as constituting a sharp "about-turn", which some see as leading in a loop back to the polices of the KMT in pre-1949 Shanghai and others as forging a

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[2]Comments made by Deng during January 18-February 21, 1992 during his Spring Festival "southern inspection tour" (**nanxun**) and reported in "**Zai Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shanghai Dengdide Tanhua Yaodian**" (Important Points of Talks in Wuhan, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shanghai and Other Places) XMWB front page November 6, 1993. My translation.

course tangential to both these models. Others stressed distinct continuities between the Maoist past and the present. In examining the motives behind the opening of the sluice, I note representations of **gaige kaifang** as initiated by the state or as adopted reactively by the state because it had no option but to legitimize popular practice.

In the third section I outline the new "roads" and the "flows" which have been permitted by the opening of the sluice. This includes that of information, capital and people to and from abroad and also within China. As implied by this term, a stream of pent up energy appears to have been released with many new opportunities and choices but also unprecedented risks and uncertainties. Several million Shanghainese had begun to side-channel their energies into second jobs and/or brave the storms of the "share sea" (**guhai**). Many intellectuals had seized the opportunity to "take to the sea" of business (**xiahai**). However, others were sinking in the flood of commercialism or were marooned in **danwei** where little appeared to have changed. Despite this, "water levels" (**shuiping**), that is living standards, generally had risen and this promoted a "tide" of consumerism.

When irrigating fields great care must be exercised - water is vital to promote vigorous growth but if not channelled properly it may be squandered whilst too much water can also cause devastation. Both uncontrolled, surging waves and a proliferating, criss-crossing tangle of roads may create chaos - a great fear of many informants. In the fourth section I examine some of the effects of the flood water and the dangerous currents and murky depths of **gaige kaifang**. There is evidence that this flow has washed away or, at least, diluted much of the Party's power and influence over everyday life. Some complained that the tide of commercialism is washing away even those dregs of China's traditional culture and morality left behind after the Cultural Revolution and other political campaigns. Certainty and stability is also being drained away leaving behind a residue of anxiety and short-termism. Amongst the currents and turbulence were complaints over growing inequalities and notions that the undeserving prosper most. In the television series **Heshang** ("River Elegy"), the sea is depicted as blue - pure, clean and refreshing. However, I heard views which contest this image and portray the sea as dirty, dangerous and murky. From my informants I was often presented with a description of Shanghai in which much is believed to be hidden from view and inchoate. Amongst the flotsam and jetsam deposited on "Shanghai beach" (**Shanghai tan** - a name sometimes used for the city) was a widespread belief that morals are deteriorating and that there is increasing corruption and sleaze.

In the fifth and final section I examine briefly some of the new formations and channels which were becoming apparent. This includes the ways in which **gaige kaifang** was said to have changed the "roads in people's minds" (**silu**) with changes in behaviour and attitudes, a renewed stress upon education and the reproduction of inequalities through differing educational opportunities. Finally, I note some of the expectations my informants had for the future of Shanghai.

1.1 Gaige Kaifang

Deng Xiaoping has described **gaige kaifang** as "crossing the river, feeling the boulders" (**mozhe shitou guohe**). In much the same way my piloting of the reader through the shoals and currents of this chapter has a broad and ambitious remit. Where present I mark out clear trends which emerge in local residents' discourses on contemporary Shanghai and hope to convey a sense of the potential range and parameters of discourses. As a caveat to this I note the following divergent views on the impact of **gaige kaifang** on the city:

Kaifang *was like a tidal wave (**chaoshui**). Its impact was far greater than the leaders ever expected.*

In recent years many things have changed in a way one could not have believed possible.

*Talk in the foreign press about China's turn for the better (**haozhuan**) is nonsense. China's economic prosperity is fake. Foreigners see only the tall buildings, numerous restaurants and good clothing in Shanghai but the social and economic system has not changed.*

The Communist Party hangs the sheep's meat of socialism but sells the dog meat of dictatorship.[3] *There has been no change at all. It is just like a conjuring trick.*

To muddy waters further, I should add that these are the comments of a single person. With further explication it would be possible to unravel some of the apparent inconsistencies. Beyond this I suggest that these apparently and mutually contradictory views are not simply illogical but highlight the degree of flux and tensions inherent in the changes underway in Shanghai. Responses and reactions to the changes are still being "composed", there is an ongoing process of adjustment, of finding one's bearings.

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[3]This is an adaptation of the phrase: **gua yangtou, mai gourou** - hang up a sheep's head and sell dog meat - try to palm off something inferior to what it purports to be (CED 1988: 247).

1.1.1 Understanding **Gaige Kaifang**

During 1992-4 the term **gaige kaifang** was ubiquitous and repeated like a mantra in all forms of state propaganda - its use a dozen or more times was typical on the daily six o'clock television news. **Gaige kaifang** is claimed as the means to achieve the "Four Modernizations" advocated as national policy since the late 1970s and intended to make China a rich and prosperous nation. Attempts at urban reform were begun during the mid-1980s but most informants considered the degree of change in Shanghai as minimal until after Deng Xiaoping's southern tour (**nanxun**) in Spring 1992. This visit coincided with central government plans to change Shanghai from being the centre of the planned socialist economy to an international financial and commercial city at the centre of a "socialist market economy".

Even in official use the term **gaige** (reform) tends to be applied indiscriminately to any type of administrative change or innovation in sectors ranging from housing to labour policies, enterprise management and politics. **Kaifang** - the "Open Door" policy - may be viewed as one of the reforms. It refers primarily to allowing an inflow of foreign capital, technology, expertise and goods and to promoting export of the latter. I found that local residents often used these key slogans, and especially **kaifang**, in a range of different ways and sometimes in radically different senses to those they encountered daily through broadcast and other media.

When I asked a young employee in a joint venture company what he understood by the term "**gaige**" ("reform") he replied immediately "make money". I next asked his understanding of "**kaifang**", his response was the same. This interpretation is the most baldly materialistic I was given and is a view criticized in the Chinese media as money worship. An older academic I asked the meaning of **gaige** remarked "nobody knows" (*me nin xiaode*/**meiyou ren zhidao**) and added that Deng Xiaoping himself has described China as "crossing the stream, feeling the boulders (**mozhe shitou guohe**)" - suggesting his own lack of a clear definition. This expression also suggests some sort of necessary feedback processing, a dialectic, if "progress" is to be maintained. When referred to as a policy the term **kaifang** is translated as the "Open Door", although this is not its literal meaning - a significant distinction which I discuss further below. Amongst its dictionary definitions **kaifang** has the meaning "lift a ban" and I heard it used to refer, for instance, to allowing the installation of telephones in private homes in the early 1980s and the sale of nude photographs later in the decade. In one instance, which stretched this dictionary definition and is presumably not what Party leaders have in mind, a retired nurse

commented that "with **kaifang** the **laobaixing** can complain and even curse them [i.e. the Communist Party] - this is now **kaifang**."

In everyday use **kaifang** often indicates a sense of being "modern" and/or open-minded. **Kaifang** also has an implicit sense of being open to Western ideas. Somebody who is **kaifang** is less bound by "traditional" practices whether this be parental involvement in choosing a marriage partner or acceptance of cremation in funeral rites. Young people often described themselves as **kaifang** and older people as conservative. On one occasion, when I followed local courtesy and took a gift of oranges to an interviewee's home, he remarked that this was unnecessary because his home was **kaifang**. People prepared to talk openly and frankly with a Western observer such as myself could be described as **kaifang**. At a more general level Shanghainese often described their city and its people as **kaifang**, especially when contrasted to other parts of China such as Beijing. This sense of **kaifang** draws upon an historical imagination of Shanghai as a city which was open to the West and whose people retain an openness to the outside world and a willingness and ability to accept new ideas. There is also an important parallel in the way in which - as all Chinese schoolchildren are taught - "the Chinese door was forced open by British cannons" in the 1840s and the way the Chinese authorities now open this door themselves from the inside, on their terms.

1.1.2 Metaphor

Metaphor is a fundamental feature of language. Lakoff and Johnson write that it is a "way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding" (1980: 36). As William Taylor states in an exploration of metaphors in education, "[f]ar from being a mere linguistic decoration, metaphor comes to be seen as a ubiquitous feature of our thinking and our discourse, the basis of the conceptual systems by means of which we act within our worlds" (1984: 5). Through a series of examples Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate that "metaphor is pervasive in everyday life" and that "[o]ur ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature" (3).

As an anthropologist seeking to explore and explain the cultural values and understandings of another society it is of great value to explore indigenous metaphors. In some instances English and Chinese share similar systematic metaphorical concepts. An obvious example are orientational metaphors in which, for example, up is good, bad is down, high status is up, low status is down, virtue is up, depravity is down (Ibid: 14-

21).[4] Similarly, there is a shared metaphor of politics as drama. In Chinese, for instance, **shangtai** - "appear on the stage" also means to "assume power", conversely, **xiatai** means both to "step down from a stage" and to "leave office". Chinese people would also feel an affinity with Shakespeare's analogy of life itself as a drama. They too may describe life as lived on a stage (**wutai**) with people acting out diverse roles (**yan juese**). The conception of Chinese people as "actors" was elaborated upon by Arthur Smith who wrote that "[a] Chinese thinks in theatrical terms... Upon very slight provocation, any Chinese regards himself in the light of an actor in a drama" (1892: 16). Of particular interest, however, are those systematic metaphors which differ from those of English. These may provide us with insights into differing ways of perceiving, understanding and, ultimately, behaving. It is to an examination of such metaphors that I turn in the next section.

1.1.3 Metaphors of Reform

China generally is not at all like the willow-pattern plate. I do not know if I really had expected it to be blue and white; but it was a disappointment to find it so very brown and muddy.

Mrs Archibald (1899: 5)

Thirty or forty years ago [Shanghai] was a huge mud flat, that the high tides continually invaded, so that the lower rooms of existing houses were often flooded and made useless for habitation. Low grounds, where stagnant pools and green, slimy water abounded, existed everywhere.

Rev. Macgowan (1897: 69)

A contributor to Shanghai's **Wenhui Bao** wrote that "[n]ew China was born in the gunfire of the war of liberation."[5] He remarks upon the way military vocabulary and "military consciousness" (**junshi yishi**) permeated daily life from the early 1950s (see also Gaulton 1981: 56), and especially in the Cultural Revolution. At that time military clothing was the most fashionable, Shanghai's "Peace Cinema" (**heping dianyingyuan**) was renamed "Combat Cinema" (**zhandou dianyingyuan**) and words such as **fangong** ("counterattack"), **zhenxian** ("ranks, front") and **douzheng** ("struggle, combat") were used in civilian affairs. In the reform era, the writer notes an "inevitable" diminution of this military consciousness and use of military language - this was evident to me in the much greater use of such langauge amongst those above the age of about 35. This would appear to be part of a paradigmatic shift in metaphor. The Maoist notion of "politics in

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[4]For example, **gaoshang** - noble, lofty and **xialiu** - lower reaches of a river; low-down, mean, obscene, dirty. Similarly, **shangji** - higher level, higher authorities and **xiamian** - below, underneath; lower level, subordinate.

[5]WHB 7 August 1993: 6.

command" (**zhengzhi guashuai**) has been replaced by a stress upon economic efficiency (**jingji xiaoyi**). A party member in his sixties described the Communist Party under Mao as "war-natured" (**dazhangxing**) and as running the economy badly. Under Deng Xiaoping he considered that this "war-effect" (**zhanzheng yinxiang**) has reduced and been replaced by economics. As I point out below, the language of the reform era often draws upon analogies of natural forces, of irrigation and cultivation rather than warfare. Although replaced in some contexts and diluted by a proliferation of terms it is important to note that military metaphors still persist. Examples include **zhanlüe** - strategy ("battle tactics"), **nanxun** ("southern patrol") the name given to Deng Xiaoping's Spring Festival 1992 visit to southern China, and **xiagang** ("come or go off sentry duty") which has entered civilian life in the 1990s to describe a worker who has been laid-off.

Changes in metaphor are matched by a radical shift from the "revolutionary gaze" - epitomized in statues of Mao Zedong, eyes focused on the distance and arm outstretched - to the promise of rewards now (cf. Croll 1994). A university student commented to me that in the past "horizons were very limited, now there is much more scope." This comment suggests that while Mao looked toward the fulfilment of his distant dream ordinary people were "looking at the sky from the bottom of a well" (**zuo jing guan tian**), that is, they had a very narrow and restricted view. In the imagery of state rhetoric the revolutionary gaze and arm reaching for the future has been replaced by Deng's admonition for Shanghai people to "grasp" the opportunities they see before them. The shift to materialism and pragmatism is encapsulated in the homonym of "look to the future" (**wang qian kan**), which by changing a single character, becomes "look towards money".

The key metaphors which seeped through everyday discourse and appeared to structure the discourse on change in Shanghai were of two main kinds, the first socio-spatial, the second "watery" metaphors. The term "open door" is a significant generative metaphor in its own right. As I note above, this is not a literal translation of **kaifang**. However, in media reports and in everyday conversation people did talk about the opening of China's "door" (**men**) or "window" (**chuangzi** or **chuangkou**) in just this way. I will investigate issues of who opened this door or window, when and why and then turn to representations of who or what has come through this door, or simply what can be seen through them, and with what consequences. At times people spoke of the **feng** - the "wind" that had blown in. Once again, this is an inadequate and partial translation of a Chinese term. In Chinese, **feng** has a diverse range of meanings and connotations in a

wide variety of contexts. It can, for example, mean "style, practice, custom; scene, view; news, information". It combines with many other characters such as **fengcai** (elegant demeanour), **fengchuan** (rumour), **fengjing** (scenery), **fengliu** (dissolute), and **fengsu** (custom). Now that Shanghai is being promoted as one of China's most open "doors" it is interesting to note briefly the title of books by Western writers such as Mary Gamewell who described Shanghai as the Gateway to China (1916) and Rhoads Murphey's Shanghai: Key to Modern China (1953).

From the etymology of **kaifang** one gains an insight into what it may involve beyond the usual translation "Open Door". **Kai** has a range of meanings including "open" as in **kaisuo** "open a lock; make an opening, open up; open out, come loose" as in **koukai le** "the knot has come untied". **Fang** also has various meanings such as "let go, set free, release; let out, expand; blossom, open". From this etymology one gains a sense of unleashing, untying, loosening and opening. The portrayal of **gaige kaifang** noted earlier and discussed in more detail below as like the opening of a sluice gate becomes all the more apposite.

Another set of socio-spatial metaphors refers to roads and routes. At a macro level the route metaphor is used to describe the "road" taken in national policy. China is officially described as "taking the socialist road". In the late 1950s China failed in an attempt to make a "Great Leap Forward" towards communism. In the Cultural Revolution people battled between the "two roads" of capitalism and socialism. One of the propaganda slogans for National Day, October 1, 1993 written on a long red banner hung from the old colonial buildings on the Bund visible to the millions of people on the streets below stated that: Reform and the "Open Door" are the essential means (literally "road") to liberate and develop socialist production! (**Gaige kaifang shi jiefang he fazhan shehuizhuyi shengchanli de biyou zhi lu**!). The "socialist market economy" is the latest version of the "socialist road" designed to bring progress (**jinbu** - literally "steps forward"). The Shanghai Party boss, Wu Bangguo, commented on Deng Xiaoping saying, "[t]his [1993] Spring Festival...he encouraged us to liberate our thinking, seek truth from facts...have a little more courage, take rather faster steps (**bufa**). He said, now Pudong's development can only advance and cannot retreat, moreover you have no way back (**tuilu**)."[6] Many Shanghainese I spoke with felt that the city had embarked upon a quite different route from that advocated by Mao Zedong and that the economy was "galloping ahead" (**tengfei**).

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[6]JFRB 3 July 1993: 1.

At a more mundane level, opportunities and people are roads (see chapter 4) as is made clear in the popular local phrase **duo yi ge pengyou, duo yi tiao lu** - one more friend, is one more road. Somebody without a "road" (**meiyou lu**) has few choices whilst somebody with "thick roads" (**luzi hen cu**) - which may involve the "backdoor" or even bribery (**pulu** - "spreading the path") - can achieve their aims. Since Shanghai was given the "green light" (**ludeng**) for economic development by the Politburo in the early 1990s, new "roads" have opened up. There are increasing opportunities not only for those who take the "right way" (**zhenglu**) but also those who seek to prosper by "crooked roads" (**wailuzi**) such as the "path of prostitution" (**huanglu**) or the "path of money" (i.e. bribery -**jinlu**).

Flying over southern China, one is reminded of the importance of water to people's livelihoods. Rivers and streams are abundant and everywhere there is evidence of human endeavour to bound and channel this vital but potentially destructive force. For millennia the main form of long distance transportation was by inland waterway or coastal boats. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Chinese language should be "drenched" with the symbolism of water, the sea, rivers, tides and waves. The Chinese term for each of these phenomena has a range of meanings and exists within a much wider semantic field (sea?) than the English equivalents. For instance, meanings of the term for "flow" - **liu** - include: "moving from place to place; spread, circulate; degenerate; banish; class, grade". It joins with other characters to form terms such as **liumang** - hooligan, **liuli** - fluent, smooth, **liushi** - passing time, **liuyan** - rumour, gossip, and **liuxing** - popular, fashionable. The (water?)course of a person's life and the past can be likened to a river, for example, in the term **huisu wangshi** ("recall past events" - **huisu** means both "to recall, trace back" and to "go against the stream"; **wangshi** - "past events").

During my research period in Shanghai "watery" metaphors seemed to be particularly important generative metaphors of people's portrayals of the impact of **gaige kaifang**, the policies adopted after the passing of the "great helmsmen", Mao Zedong. This is all the more apt in Shanghai, which was originally a small fishing village, and whose name itself means "above the sea". Nautical allusions are used by Deng Xiaoping, who remarked that "the economy should develop faster, and it cannot be expected to sail in quiet and plain waters all the time... It's like a boat sailing against the current which must keep forging ahead or will fall behind.[7] Similarly, a China Daily article published during Spring Festival 1993 titled "Deng Says to 'Seize the Chance'" recorded that Deng

[7]CD 12 November 1993: 4.

"urged Shanghai leaders and people to 'brave the wind and the waves, do a solid job, overcome difficulties and scale new heights'."[8] In portrayals of the rapid (rapids?) changes brought about by **gaige kaifang** references to the "sea", "tides" and "waves" were common in the local media and the everyday conversations of Shanghainese I encountered.

In the Chinese television documentary series **Heshang** its writers (Su & Wang 1991), strong supporters of the "Open Door" policy, contrasted the turbulent, muddy Yellow River and the clear blue water of the Pacific. Commenting on the symbolism of **Heshang**, Richard Bodman remarks, "[t]he overall message is clear: just as the Yellow River must flow into the sea and its murky yellow waters merge with the clear blue ocean, so too must China abandon isolation, open up to the world, eliminate the "sediment" of its traditional culture, and seek for more "transparency" in the workings of society and government" (1991: 16). This contrast is especially clear in the sixth part of the series, "Blueness", written by Xie Xuanjun and Yuan Zhiming who promote a theory of "human civilization split into two great divisions, of land-based civilization and sea-faring civilization" (Su & Wang 1991: 204). They contrast the insularity and conservatism of the "yellow culture" of "orientals with a deep tradition of despotism" (220) with "blueness" which represents the values of modern western civilization, transparency,[9] democracy, individualism, vitality and acceptance of a broad variety of different cultures and new ideas. The authors note that "[b]arely a century has passed since the ancient spirit of the Yellow River has clearly seen the face of the sea and recognized its vastness and strength" (212). They believe that "only when the sea-breeze of 'blueness' faintly turns to rain and once again moistens this stretch of parched yellow soil, only then will this awesome vitality, previously released only during the happy days of the Spring Festival, be able to bring new life to the vast yellow soil plateau" (213). This programme and the series concludes with the belief that "[t]he surging waves of the sea will here meet head on with the Yellow River... After a thousand years of solitude,[10] the Yellow River

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[8]CD 25 January 1993: 1.

[9]Note that "transparency" (**toumingdu**) - a term used by Zhao Ziyang - is the Chinese equivalent of the Soviet **glasnost** ("openness") (Su & Wang 1991: 219-20, note 59).

[10]This is an allusion to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel, A Hundred Years of Solitude (Su & Wang 1991: 222, note 69).

has finally seen the blue sea" (222).[11]

A final metaphor which it is interesting to mention is the official description of Shanghai as the "dragon-head". It is said, for instance, that Shanghai "has entered a new era by playing a "dragon-head" role, that is leading the way in China's economic growth."[12] However, this metaphor, which owes more to geomancy than socialism, had not spread far beyond media reports. However, it may be worth noting that the term **longtou** - dragon-head - also means a tap or faucet.

1.2 Opening the Sluice - Representations of the Place of **Gaige Kaifang** in Modern Chinese History

For approximately twenty-odd years in the middle of this century, China once again faced a good opportunity for economic development. And yet locking our country's door and blindfolding ourselves we set off to 'surpass England and America', never ceasing to engage in one great political movement after another...so that in the end our national economy was on the brink of collapse.

Heshang documentary (Su & Wang 1991: 171)

The majority of Shanghai residents I encountered portrayed the reform policies as constituting a radical departure from previous policies. One intellectual described **kaifang** to me as the opposite of Mao's policies of self reliance (**zili gengsheng**) and closing the country to international intercourse (**biguan zi shou**). The fact that it was actually at Mao's instigation that China "opened" its door by renewing contacts with the United States and taking China into the United Nations in the early 1970s (see Segal 1992: 163) seems largely to be glossed over. A Party member in his sixties described Mao's approach to me as "closing the door to become a big king" (**guanmen cheng dawang**) - Chinese rulers could purvey an image of China as a model of socialist success without fear of contradiction by comparisons with alternative images. He believed that "**gaige kaifang** is a change (**zhuanbian**) of 180 degrees from Mao's time. So Deng Xiaoping is quite right when he says that we must 'change our thinking' (**huan naozi** - literally "change brains"), [almost to himself he added] heaven and earth turned upside down (**tianfan difu**)." As an instance of this he noted that "where there was once 'dictatorship

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[11]One of the more intriguing aspects of **Heshang** are the profound similarities in its ideology to that of the colonial discourse on China. Lanning & Couling, for instance, wrote of the pre-Opium War "stagnation... in China's progress" and described it as due to "the lack of suitable stimulation from without" (1921: 15). The makers of **Heshang** appear to desire just such a "stimulation". The portrayal of "the West" in **Heshang** is idealized, even romantic. As I will show, it is not only pure blue water that may flow through.

[12]SS 24 September 1993: 1.

of the proletariat' now many stores are run by Hong Kong bosses." He observed that "from a theoretical point of view many people feel confused (**mihuo**)." Like most informants he considered the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP in December 1978 as the crucial turning point in the course of events (**zhuanzhe**).[13] In his estimation this Plenum marked China's "second liberation", the first having been the 1919 May Fourth movement - "a great liberation from feudal thought." In 1985, Deng Xiaoping stated "reform is China's second revolution" (1993: 113). My informant's views would seem to constitute a slippage from the rhetoric which privileges 1949 as the point of dramatic change. A man in his fifties told me that since this Plenum, China had "extricated itself from the 'leftist road'." He commented that "previously people were locked-in [he indicated the meaning by miming a locking motion]. There was no freedom. Now it is **kaifang** and liberation (**jiefang**)." The term **jiefang** is usually reserved to describe the CCP's takeover of power in 1949.

In promoting its latest version of the "socialist road" the Communist Party faces considerable difficulties. On the one hand, many of the policies this involves appear to be diametrically opposed to those of the preceding era, yet to criticize and repudiate *all* of those policies would undermine its legitimacy. There is a limit to how much blame for "leftist" policies such as egalitarianism can be heaped onto the "Gang of Four". In such circumstances, there is a premium upon vagueness and opacity. Current policies - the "socialist market economy" - are described as "socialism with Chinese characteristics". However, a common view of people I spoke with was summed-up by one informant who noted that "although current slogans all talk about socialism and Marxism the **laobaixing** are very clear that the socialist market economy is actually capitalism. The higher levels (**shangji**) cannot say this because they would have to repudiate all they have been doing for the last forty years." It was not unusual to hear people speak of "capitalism with Chinese characteristics". One man who used this expression told me that he had first heard it on the *BBC World Service*. Shanghainese I encountered would undoubtedly agree with Richard Madsen's assessment that the CCP is "ideologically dead" (1993b: 183). At times Party rhetoric itself indicates the distinct change of tack with calls for people to "liberate their thinking" (**jiefang sixiang**) and "change their minds" (**huan naodai**). There is also a distinct contrast between the Cultural Revolution rhetoric of slogans such as: we would rather have the grass of socialism, than the jewels of capitalism (**ningyao shehuizhuyi de cao, bu yao zibenzhuyi de bao**) and Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic

[13]A view shared by Western observers such as Tsou (1983).

approach summed up in his advocating that "practice is the sole criterion of truth" and more recent comments that: it does not matter if something is called capitalism or socialism, so long as it raises the living standards of the ordinary people."[14]

I found general agreement that the years since the late 1970s could be divided into four stages: 1) late 1970s to mid-1980s - de-politicization, legalization of **getihu**,[15] agricultural reforms,[16] but otherwise limited urban reforms; 2) 1984-5 to mid-1989 - **gaige kaifang** advocated with limited, steady reforms;[17] 3) mid-1989 until 1991 - "economic adjustment" and retrenchment following June 4, 1989;[18] 4) Spring Festival 1992 onwards. As Jacobs and Hong point out "Shanghai had been sacrificed at the beginning of the reform programme" (1994: 232). After limited reforms in the 1980s there was a retrenchment for almost two years after June 4. Several local people described this time as **men** - depressing (also "tightly closed, sealed") - the character is of a heart enclosed within a gate. Most informants felt that the main moves of **gaige kaifang** in Shanghai, the unlocking of this "gate", followed Deng Xiaoping's southern tour (**nanxun**) to Shenzhen and Shanghai at Spring Festival 1992 through which he sought to "re-energise the reform process" (Shambaugh 1993b: 488). Comments Deng was reported to have made at this time (see start of this chapter) provided the crucial impetus to a quantitatively and qualitatively greater scope and pace of reform in Shanghai. In particular, Deng called for Shanghai to take "greater steps" and have "more courage" in reform and even indicated his regret that he had not included Shanghai as one of the original Special Economic Zones established in 1979.[19] People were to "seize the opportunity (**zhuazhu shiji**)." Shanghai, along with fourteen other coastal cities, was

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[14]A reformulation of his comment that: It does not matter if it's a white cat or a black cat, it's a good cat so long as it catches mice" - a statement made as early as March 1961 (Li 1994: 376).

[15]On **getihu** see Bruun 1988, Gold 1989, 1990, Gates 1991, Young 1991. In 1988, larger private enterprises (**siying qiye**) which could employ over eight people were permitted.

[16]A policy which one informant described as similar to that followed earlier in Taiwan of "land to the tiller" (**gengzhe you qi tian**).

[17]The Third Plenum of the Twelfth Central Committee in October 1984 endorsed urban reforms such as the development of the commodity economy and advocated learning from capitalist countries.

[18]On June 4 generally see Barmé 1991, Chan 1991, Chan & Unger 1991, Niming 1990, Sullivan 1990, Unger 1991. On events in Shanghai see Forward 1991, Warner 1991.

[19]Special economic zones were described by Premier Zhao Ziyang in 1984 as "bridgeheads in our opening to the outside world" (cited in Fewsmith 1986: 78). As Jacobs & Hong point out (1994: 226), Deng's "mistake" was due to Shanghai's importance for central government revenues. Shanghai has just 1.1% of China's population but provides one-fifth to one-fourth of central government revenues.

"opened" to foreign investment in April 1984.

During his January 1993 Spring Festival visit to Shanghai, Deng is reported to have said that Shanghai should "make some change in one year, and a great change in three years" (**yi nian bian ge yang, san nian da bian yang**).[20] Similarly, in a speech at the end of 1993 Jiang Zemin stated that "we must seize the opportunity, and speed up the steps (**bufa**) in **gaige kaifang** and modernization"[21] A local sociology lecturer told me that Deng's comments "represented the aspirations (**xinyuan**) of the **laobaixing**" - it was exactly what they wanted to hear. As an outside observer who had been in Shanghai between 1989-90 and had also felt the constricted atmosphere then, I found a palpable difference when I next returned in 1992.

Many people depicted policy changes in Shanghai as constituting a return to policies promoted by the KMT before 1949. A company manager who held this view added that "all Shanghai lacks is the race track" - he expected that eventually one will be built. A young designer felt that with **gaige kaifang** "China has returned to an old circle (**lao quanzi**). The policies of Chiang Kai-shek are now followed by Deng Xiaoping. The Communist Party criticized the KMT for selling land to foreigners and called it 'betraying the country' (**maiguo**). Now the Communist Party does the same thing." Another informant remarked that "if anybody but Deng Xiaoping had advocated selling land to foreigners they would have been called 'counter-revolutionaries'." Despite Deng's endorsement of this policy it still provoked considerable resentment. A university student commented that "many **laobaixing** feel strongly that renting land to foreigners is 'betraying the country' (**maiguo**) and similar to the days of the foreign concessions." A young lecturer complained that "leasing land to foreigners is selling the property of Shanghai's children and grand children." However, he considered that the state has few powers to prevent land being leased in this way since localism (**difanghua**) has become much stronger with **gaige kaifang**.

The sense of returning to the past was accentuated by the revival of pre-1949 terms such as *dzi ka*/**qianke** (broker), **yezonghui** (nightclub) and **maiban** (comprador). Many Shanghainese expressed regret that several decades had been wasted. On several occasions informants expressed this regret using a phrase from the classic novel The Dream of Red Mansions - **zao zhi jinri, hebi dangchu**. A dictionary translation is "if I

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[20]XMWB 23 January 1993 headline article.

[21]XMWB 5 December 1993: 1.

had known it would come to this, I would have acted differently" (CED 1988: 135). However, in these instances it could best be rendered as: "if the policies currently being pursued are correct, why were they not followed from the start [i.e. 1949]." One man who expressed this lament told me "I saw the corruption of the KMT before 1949 and the good things done by the Communist Party in the early 1950s. Now China has undergone all kinds of shifts and changes to return to a situation worse than when the whole thing started forty years ago. If China had developed in the way it was before 1949 things would be much better now." Many informants had sympathy for such views, expressing a sense of waste and squandered opportunities with two "lost" generations. Often comparison was drawn between Shanghai and the "Four Little Dragons" and Japan. From being the most developed of these places in 1949 Shanghai had slipped to being the most backward. An interesting aspect of notions of returning to the past was that many people evaluated this in positive terms. It is a telling comment when, after decades of educating the populace on the evils of the KMT and colonialism, people such as a young lecturer expressed the hope and expectation that in the future "Shanghai will be like it was in the 1940s, a lively international city."

A Party member who broadly accepted the official line commented that "from the eyes of the past what is happening now is all capitalism." He remarked that "before even growing flowers or keeping a goldfish was criticised as a bourgeois lifestyle. Now everyone goes in for share dealing and the son [Rong Yiren] of a Shanghai capitalist is Vice-President!" He noted that in the 1950s hooliganism, prostitution and gambling had been eradicated, but had now all returned. With a tone of incredulity and irony he added "for three decades China struggled for the sake of socialism, now we go in for capitalism. Now Deng Xiaoping says it doesn't matter if something is called socialism or capitalism. Some feel their decades fighting for the revolution were all for nothing."

The makers of **Heshang** point out that the "closed-door policy" originated in the Ming dynasty (Su & Wang 1991: 164). One intellectual I spoke with also located **gaige kaifang** policies within a broader historical framework. For him, **gaige kaifang** constituted a new direction not only in terms of the Maoist past but also when compared to "traditional" China. He noted that in imperial times the Chinese economy did not develop because Confucian values stressed agriculture and looked down upon business (**zhongnong yashang**). Observing that "now everyone wants to go into business", he considered this a highly significant change in people's way of thinking (**sixiang gaibian**) that had occurred with **gaige kaifang**. In other words, he considered **gaige kaifang** to be

bringing about more fundamental changes in "Chinese culture" than had occurred during the Maoist era. In his estimation, Maoist policies and the commercialism of the reform era have coalesced to produce an unbalanced/deformed (**jixing** - literally a medical deformity, malformation) and abnormal (**fanchang**) society.

Set against these portrayals of profound change were views which stressed continuities and lack of change. An interesting instance of this is provided by a contributor to **Meizhou Wenyi Bao** who grew up during the Cultural Revolution and who describes his thinking (**silu** - "mental roads") as having been "contaminated" (**zhanran** - literally "soaked and dyed") by the Cultural Revolution. He describes how he compares his early experiences to the "new environment he encounters before him" and he clearly sees distinct parallels. For instance, numerous shops have suddenly emerged at many high schools,[22] which reminds him of the way all kinds of "combat units" and "counterrevolutionary troops" sprang up at these schools during the Cultural Revolution. Similarly, he likens Shanghai's "three million share dealers" to participants in previous political campaigns. In both cases, people gathered in Shanghai's alleys and doorways passing on and discussing the latest information, seeing who has gained and who lost "political or economic capital." Another example, could be the way each **danwei** aimed at self sufficiency, a feature derived from the Communist Party's origins as a guerilla organization. A university, for instance, may have a bakery, printing factory, hospital, laundry and a lorry division. With the reduction of state funding each section now independently attempts to engage in commercial activities to try and make a profit.

1.2.1 Why **gaige kaifang**?

In the same way as the terms "**gaige**" and "**kaifang**" were understood in varying ways, so divergent explanations were proposed for the motive behind the state's adoption of these policies. These accounts extended from two extremes. The first I characterise as passive, the second as conspiratorial. By passive, I mean those accounts which accepted and closely resembled the Party line. Put simply, this version is that the Communist Party recognized certain mistakes had been made in the past and now promoted new, improved policies designed to increase the living standards and well-being of the populace. Conspiratorial accounts, by contrast, construed these policies as having been adopted solely in an attempt to maintain the Party's rule. As one informant

[22]Since 1988 schools have been allowed to set up enterprises such as shops, factories and set up courses in order to make money.

expressed it, "the party had no other way out (**chulu**). The closed door policy (**bise zhengce**) was no good, it had to change. The point of **gaige kaifang** is to save the skin of the Communist Party and not for the sake of the **laobaixing**." A similar view was that "without **gaige kaifang** the Communist Party would have collapsed. **Gaige kaifang** is advantageous for the ruling class (**tongzhi jieji**), but not the **laobaixing**." A factory worker noted that "previously the government used power to control the **laobaixing**, now it uses money." In his estimation, Deng Xiaoping's intention with **gaige kaifang** is that "his children will have advantages." An intellectual wondered whether "the government sees **kaifang** as a kind of release - like loosening the belt of one's trousers - in this way they feel there is less of a threat (**weiji**) to themselves." However, he believed that there "could not now be a return (**tuibu** - literally "backward steps") to the old policies." In his estimation, the Party could open the door but lacked the power to close it again.

It appears that what are promoted as "reforms" by the state are often a *post hoc* recognition of what is already being done on the ground or a response to a situation the state cannot control. A state **danwei** worker commented on the pace of change that "things which were illegal two or three months ago are now promoted." As an example she cited roadside night stalls. Press reports initially told people not to set up these stalls. A couple of months later these activities were being encouraged. The major increase in moonlighting began especially in 1991 and appears primarily to have been a response to state enterprises laying off workers. Similarly, in November 1993, it was announced that individuals would be allowed to trade foreign currency. A China Daily Business Weekly report cites a local official as saying that "it will be a severe attack" on the city's black market in foreign exchange and underground foreign exchange trading companies.[23] The stock market also shows state policy as following on behind popular practices (see chapter 6).[24] Initially most stock trading was carried on in black market or semi-legal deals. Only later did the state permit the establishment of the Shanghai Stock Exchange. It should be added that the central government may, of course, have turned a blind eye to such practices as the early moonlighting and stock trading regarding them as experiments which it could suppress if need be.

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[23]7-13 November 1993: 3.

[24]The introduction of the rural responsibility system is another instance of this. The journalist Jasper Becker found that in many parts of China peasants spontaneously divided up land before the state policy was announced (personal communication).

1.3 Opening the Floodgates - Changes Brought About by **Gaige Kaifang**

Before the Flood

A local social science researcher commented to me that under the socialist planned economy until the late 1970s "food, accommodation, household registration, child bearing, school attended, employment, work done and salary were all decided by the state - there was no other way (**meiyou qita chulu**). What each person could do or obtain was more or less the same." Other informants described pre-reform Shanghai as **ninggu** - congealed or coagulated - and its economy as **si** - dead. Similarly, Parish and Whyte depict early to mid-1970s urban China as characterized by residential stability and "extreme bureaucratization and equality" (1984: 6). Writing on Cultural Revolution Shanghai, Lynn White concluded that [t]he daily lives of many Shanghai citizens are largely determined by political decisions" (1978: 11). **Gaige kaifang** is designed to unblock restrictions, open up new channels and enliven (**bianhuo**) the economy. By 1994, it had begun to make changes in each of the sectors mentioned.

An opened door suggests the possibility for both ingress and egress, and to be able to both gaze out and be gazed upon. The sluice gate metaphor seems especially appropriate since it suggests a build up of pressure, with a powerful inflow, followed, perhaps, by some backwash. In this section I follow through and investigate indigenous notions of such movement. A particular concern is to highlight those areas of "slippage" where new channels have formed or seepage has permeated established courses.

1.3.1 Information

Elisabeth Croll describes the former "revolutionary enclosure" in the Chinese countryside with a "scarcity of information" and a singular, vertical channel of information and a single line of authority (1994: 118-20). Although it was harder to enforce such controls in a city like Shanghai, information flow was still highly restricted and access to it "highly stratified" (Parish & Whyte 1984: 299). During the 1950s media were centralized (see Nathan 1986: 153). Broadcasting was regarded primarily as a political tool - the PLA were stationed outside media centres and broadcasters read from censored statements. The arts generally were officially intended to serve politics and the Communist Party. A high level of surveillance and fear of repercussions prevented the voicing of many complaints. Parish and Whyte found that "[m]ost residents simply remained in the dark about what was really going on in their country" (1984: 295).

An early "flow" was the grumbling, complaining and muttering of the populace,

a simmering discontent which bubbled to the surface towards the end of the Cultural Revolution. Such weapons of the weak (cf. Scott 1990) like "water constantly dripping wears holes in stone" (**di shui chuan shi**). At this time many people began to "abandon their former trust in the paternalistic benevolence of the system" (Whyte 1992: 86). My findings support those of Martin Whyte who argues that "the reemergence of a civil society was set in motion by developments in the late Mao era" (85). These murmurings became magnified after the death of Mao and, in particular, once criticism of the Gang of Four was allowed and it was admitted that Mao had shortcomings much suppressed anger came out. One intellectual recalled that "the cursing of the whole nation burst forth like a tidal wave." It appears that the sea-wall of Communist Party power could not resist the "tide" of popular grumbling and complaining at the end of the Cultural Revolution. In losing its moral authority the Communist Party seems to have lost some of its ability to control the populace - it had no other choice but to permit this freedom to speak.

By the late 1970s there was a "much greater degree of openness among the Chinese people today than a decade ago" (Parish & Whyte 1984: 298). As with the changes in economic policy noted above, it seems that this new freedom did not flow from any liberal sentiments on the regime's part but, rather, was indicative and constitutive of a loss of state control over popular practices. People were able to voice grievances (**fa laosao**) and this reduced the degree of "mental pressure" (**sixiang yali**) felt by many in the Maoist era. I frequently heard complaints being made by people in semi-public contexts such as crowded buses or restaurants which formerly could only have been voiced, if at all, to the most trusted of intimates. As one man expressed it "before one could not complain, one dare not speak. Now I have liberation (**jiefang**). The wall (**qiang**) of the past has gone." It is notable that here the term **jiefang** is used not to describe a social release but an individual emancipation.

During the reform period there has been a significant depoliticization of everyday life. This includes a reduction of controls over the media which has allowed a proliferation of magazines, music, television and radio programmes with a much greater range of styles and themes.[25] During 1992-3, for example, live television and radio phone-in programmes became extremely popular (**liuxing** - "flow" and "prevail/be current"). Topics I heard discussed included consumer rights, sexual fulfilment and

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[25]On the proliferation of popular media in China see Bishop 1989, Chang 1989, Crowthall 1988-9, Evans 1989, Fitzgerald 1984, Howkins 1982, Kraus 1989, 1995, Landsberger 1985-6, Pickowicz 1995, Womack 1986.

redundancy. A local theatre director remarked to me that such changes were a significant departure from the past when there was "only the voice of the government". An interesting aspect of the popularity of live programmes was that the local dialect was heard more frequently on local media - another type of "voice". For a few days in May 1989 "the dike of censorship itself seemed to have been washed away" (Faison 1990: 147). In particular, from May 13-19 the "media's detailed and sympathetic reporting rivetted attention on the drama of the hunger strikers" (Walder 1989: 38).[26] Following through the watery, irrigation metaphor and bearing in mind that the Chinese term for broadcasting "**bo**" also means "sow, seed" one may see **gaige kaifang** as bringing life to many new shoots.

The proliferation of media is bound up with the commercialization of the economy and the "emergence of a cultural market" (Kraus 1995: 177). John Fitzgerald (1984) observes the commercialisation of a "significant portion of the cultural network in China" (105), with "the market place now calling the tune" (114). Rather than promote Party messages the popular media, which is increasingly dependent upon advertising revenues, must produce items which appeal to consumer tastes. Within the freer media environment it is harder for the state to prevent the appearance of critical items. Censorship controls prevent blatant criticisms of the regime, but newspaper articles and television programmes may *tang tsa bi dziu*/**da ca bian qiu** an expression derived from ping-pong which describes when a ball glances off the edge of the table. One informant likened the increasing frequency with which such items now appear as like a bowl with a leak (**loudong**).

The flow of information in China in the form of talk and a liberalization of the media has been greatly fostered by the opening of China's national door.[27] A retired man told me that in the Maoist era there "was a news blockade (**xinwen fengsuo**) and foreign broadcasts were jammed, so we did not know what the outside world was like. Only the higher levels (**shangci**) had access to foreign media." Another informant told me "Mao Zedong had a closed door policy. Deng Xiaoping threw open the window and let the wind in. People could see what the West was like." As noted above, the term for "wind" - **feng** - has a range of meanings including "news, information" and "style,

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[26]Four years later one informant recalled these few days of press freedom with a distinct sense of nostalgia. Publications at this time indicate what a free and "open" Chinese media would look like.

[27]The increasing re-internationalization of Shanghai and the increased permeability of the city's boundaries are addressed more fully in the following chapter.

practice, custom". A 38 year old saleswoman made a direct link between changing values and ideas and the "opening" of China's "door". She told me that "previously people's thinking was conservative and closed up. Mao Zedong did not allow us to see the outside world, we were blind (**mangmu**). When the door opened, we saw the discrepancy [with the West] and could not bear it."

Through the "open door" has flowed information and "strange tales from over the seas" (**haiwai qitan**). Local people are, for instance, now free to tune-in to the *BBC World Service* and the *Voice of America* and other broadcasts which drift in on foreign air-waves (*sic*). Television (**dianshi** - "electronic vision") enables people to gaze upon other people and places from their own living rooms and provides the main channel for images of other countries. Having been told for years that China was outstripping the capitalist West and hearing only of the sufferings of those in capitalist countries, people were often truly surprised by what they saw. A local economics professor commented that "until **gaige kaifang** Shanghai was regarded as the most modern (**xianjin**) city in China. After **gaige kaifang** it was revealed as backward." The makers of **Heshang** also remarked upon this noting that "[t]en years ago, when we finally opened our closed bamboo curtain and once again rejoined the world, the Chinese people---who for so long had lived in the hardship of 'transitional poverty' and the isolation of cultural despotism---were surprised to discover just how developed the capitalist West and Japan were and how comfortably their people lived" (Su & Wang 1991: 162).

A teacher felt that an important reason students demonstrated in 1989 were changes caused by **gaige kaifang**. In the past they had not seen or even heard about the outside world. With **gaige kaifang** they could compare with the rest of the world and see China's true state. In addition, the "open door" allowed the outside world to gaze upon China. This dialectic was evident during the demonstrations when many students carried banners in English obviously designed for consumption abroad (see chapter 2). Since 1989, the state has continued to actively promote the "Open Door" policy. On June 9, 1989, during his congratulatory speech to army commanders who had suppressed demonstrations in Beijing, Deng Xiaoping stated that "[w]hat is important is that we should never change China back into a closed country" (cited in Rai 1991: 123). The official objectives for Shanghai by 2010 are to "achieve an international scale and breadth of economic development. Create a modern city of the first order in world terms. Create a society that is open and outward looking with respect to China and the world" (Zhao 1993: 2).

Such slogans may be regarded as unleashing and fostering expectations for the

future. Those who expect Shanghai to develop rapidly and successfully point to factors such as its well trained workforce, favourable geographic location and the state's support for its development - one view was that the government wants to develop Shanghai at the expense of Hong Kong. A young businessman told me that he expects Shanghai will reach a similar level to New York and was confident that, at the very minimum, it will surpass Hong Kong within ten years. A retired teacher commented, "Napoleon called China a sleeping lion, it is now awakening. Once fully awake, the world will not be able to look down on this race (**minzu**)." He noted the size of China's market adding that "now America gives China special economic status, in five years time it will be the other way round." His expectation, voiced using terms (ironically) reminiscent of many Orientalist views of China, is that the outside world will be able to gaze upon a newly assertive, rich and powerful China.

1.3.2 Flows of Capital

Many Shanghainese complained about the lack of infrastructural work carried out in the city in the decades after 1949. Until the 1980s there was no new architecture to compare with the early twentieth century colonial structures on the Bund. One woman described how her uncle had left Shanghai and gone to Hong Kong in 1949. When he next returned in 1979 he found Shanghai "exactly the same, except that everything was older than before." On his most recent visit, in 1993, he noticed distinct changes and his niece commented that this redevelopment "gives people a feeling of newness." When asked what changes **gaige kaifang** had brought, local residents often responded by pointing to changes in the city's outward appearance (**waiguan**) or "face" (**mianmao**). In the mid-1980s the construction of such buildings as the Hilton Hotel and Union Building and the modern architecture of the new Hongqiao development zone near the airport were obvious signs of change. More recently, the development of Pudong, the construction of the Nanpu and Yangpu bridges - now attractions on all tourist itineraries - numerous hotels, share dealing centres, commercial entertainment centres, new roads and the underground were all visible markers of change.

These changes are due in part to a greater retention of profits made in the city. In 1985 the amount of tax revenues retained in the city increased from 13.2% to 23.2% (Jacobs & Hong 1994: 231). There has also been a significant inflow of domestic and foreign capital. A **Wenhui Bao** article stated that "[n]ineties Shanghai, has opened wide (**changkai damen**) its great door, and welcomes investors from every country to come and

invest in Shanghai... Shanghai is now deepening reform (**shenhua gaige**), and enlarging the Open Door (**kuoda kaifang**)... Shanghai is in a period of development, it is extremely bustling (**renao**) and flourishing (**xingwang**)."[28] In 1992, for instance, Shanghai introduced US $3.35 billion in foreign investment, equal to the total of the previous twelve years.[29] With the "[d]oor opening wide on the real estate market" land prices in Shanghai have rocketed.[30] In 1993, the 460 metre high Shanghai Radio and Television Tower on the east side of the Huangpu River was completed. It is in keeping with the sustained watery metaphors noted in this chapter that this structure which "is set to become a new symbol of Shanghai" should be described as "The Oriental Pearl".[31]

Despite such visible changes in Shanghai's appearance not all residents were content. A magazine editor commented to me that "with **gaige kaifang** there appear to have been many changes. For instance, there are many tall buildings. But for salaried **laobaixing** like me they are too expensive, we cannot afford them. They might as well not be there." A similar view was expressed by a local journalist who asked rhetorically, "when it comes down to it, where has there been change?" Answering his own question he continued, "the Communist Party likes superficialities (**gao biaomian wenzhang**). The **laobaixing** want larger homes and wider roads. Instead what gets built are big, expensive buildings for foreigners to live in."

1.3.3 Flow of People

International

The tide of news and information was soon followed by products and people. Opening China's door has allowed a flow of people into and out of the country. A Confucian saying describes an option when one's path is blocked: "If the way is not accepted, get on a boat and take to the seas" (**dao bu xing, cheng cha fu yu hai**). A "going abroad craze" (**chuguore**) began in the early 1980s with "large numbers of talented people turbulently flowing out of the national door (**xiongyongpengpai de liu chu guomen**)."[32] In addition to citizens sent abroad by the Chinese government for study

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[28] WHB 26 May 1993: 1.

[29] CD 6 July 1993: 4.

[30] CD 28 April 1993: 1.

[31] CD 15 November 1993: 5.

[32] "**'Chuguore' Jiang Wen Le!**" ('Going Abroad Craze' Cools!) JFRB 29 October 1993.

and training, better educated young Shanghainese seek scholarships in America, Australia and Western Europe, and other emigrants go abroad to work (**dagong**), often in Japan.[33] One commentator described this behaviour to me using a traditional proverb: water runs to low places, people move toward high places (**shui wang dichu liu, ren wang gaochu zou**). There is considerable evidence of a "brain drain". Many of Shanghai's most able intellectuals, especially university and scientific staff aged between 30-40 have gone abroad. Some seek to marry foreigners to go abroad, a few simply using them as a "spring board" (**tiaoban**) to leave China. Sometimes the wish is to obtain a foreign passport since, as one young businesswoman told me, "it is difficult to predict (**yuce**) what will happen when Deng Xiaoping dies. Having a foreign passport is a kind of insurance." A **Jiefang Ribao** article described Shanghai in 1992-3 as like Taiwan in the 1970s - since 1992 the "going abroad craze" appeared to have been "cooling" with fewer people leaving and "an irresistible tide returning to China" (**bu ke zudang de guiguochao**).[34] This shift was trumpeted as indicative of the "excellent opportunities" brought by the "continuing deepening of **gaige kaifang**" in Shanghai. For instance, young people may have the "wild ambition...unthinkable a few years ago of...oneself being a boss" (**ziji zuo laoban**).[35] This article may overstate the case somewhat but amongst young people I encountered this trend was borne out.

Businessmen, teachers, students and tourists have increasingly flooded into the city. In the first nine months of 1993, 908,000 overseas visitors came to Shanghai. Of these 605,969 were foreigners, 165,891 from Taiwan, and 123,153 from Hong Kong and Macao.[36] A saleswoman commented that "recently many foreign businessmen (**waisheng**) come to Shanghai. Shanghai is returning to how it was in the 1940s, a **shi li yangchang** (a metropolis infested with foreign adventurers - usually referring to pre-liberation Shanghai CED 1988: 800). There is now an international feel (**guoji de ganjue**)." Foreign made products were tangible evidence of China's new direction, whether it be Japanese cars and electrical equipment, American toothbrushes or British cosmetics. As one man pointed out "at the worst time, in the Cultural Revolution, I dared not have any foreign things visible in my home. Recently there have been many changes,

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[33]See Hooper 1985 Chapter 9 "Temptations from the West".

[34]See footnote 32.

[35]Ibid.

[36]SS 5 November 1993: 4.

often of 180 degrees. For example, in the past American things were described as especially bad, now even the smallest shop likes to stick up a sign saying 'China-US Joint Venture'."

Intra-National Flow

During the reform era the city boundaries have become much more permeable. One notable effect is that "a 'Southern window wind (**nanchuang feng**)' has already blown into Shanghai."[37] This "wind" takes the form of cultural influences from Guangdong and Hong Kong including music, food and linguistic expressions. A particularly significant flow is that of migrant workers from other parts of China (see White 1994). This has been made possible by the end of rationing and the reduced effectiveness of the household registration system. An article in **Wenhui Bao** reported that "[w]ith the increased dynamic development of Pudong and Shanghai's current great strides (**bumai**) towards being an internationalized great metropolis, for the second time in Shanghai's history there is a rush of great fervour (**rechao** - literally a "hot wave") towards 'Shanghai beach'". By 1993, Shanghai's floating population (**liudong renkou**) had already surpassed 2.5 million.[38] This article noted that of this "floating population" 500,000 were construction workers and that Shanghai has plans to implement a "green card" (**luka**) system for such people. A 1994 report suggested that the figure had already reached 3.3 million.[39] According to Shanghai's Mayor, Huang Ju, by the year 2010, the city will have a population of 19 to 20 million, including a 5 to 6 million floating population.[40]

A **Xinmin Wanbao** article described migrant workers as a "guerilla force...stealthily entering [Shanghai's] factories."[41] This article noted that around 100,000 female textile factory workers had been made redundant (**xiagang**) in Shanghai and that they were being replaced by a "tide" of non-Shanghainese migrant workers (**waidi mingong chao**) which "blindly flows and surges (**mangliu yongru**) into this city." The willingness of these workers to do dirty and unpleasant jobs for low wages is described

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[37]XMWB 5 November 1993: 14.

[38]WHB 13 November 1993: 6.

[39]Cited in White 1994: 86.

[40]"City of Future" SS 2 July 1993: 1.

[41]"'**Youjidui' Qiaoqiaode Jin Chang**" 22 July 1993: 12.

as presenting a "threat" and a "challenge" to redundant Shanghai women workers getting work again.

1.3.4 Flow Within Shanghai

In addition to an increasing topographical flow of people there was also flow within Shanghai in terms of greater social mobility and the opening up of new routes and channels. At the end of 1978 almost all workers were employed by the state either directly or in collective enterprises. Even in the 1980s state employees generally were "stuck" both residentially and occupationally (Davis 1990: 87). During the early 1990s, in particular, significant changes in the economic base occurred which allowed a greater range of choice. Many of the areas of life mentioned above as having been regulated are now subject to far fewer restrictions. The informant who described Shanghai as having been solidified (**ninggu**) considered that as a result of **gaige kaifang** "the social structure is more dynamic, for example, somebody without **wenhua**[42] can get rich." Another informant remarked that **gaige kaifang** provides individuals with opportunities to become useful people (**chengcai** - also "grow into useful timber").

A key shift marking a more tolerant attitude towards the "tails of capitalism" was the re-legalization in the late 1970s of small scale private entrepreneurs (**getihu**).[43] The services they provide - such as bicycle repairers and fruit stalls - alongside allowing peasants to sell their produce in the city brought significant and qualitative changes to inhabitants' daily lives. The most common explanation I was given for allowing small-scale entrepreneurs was that these were primarily people who had been in prison (**chi guansi** - "ate a lawsuit") and had no jobs when released - they were allowed to set up as **getihu** in order to give them a "road out" (**chulu**) and to maintain social order.

Many informants felt that initially **gaige kaifang** only brought new opportunities

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[42]The term **wenhua** presents great difficulties in translation. This term is defined as "civilization, culture" or "education, culture, schooling, literacy" (CED 1988: 721-2). As this definition suggests - and as its use makes apparent in everyday contexts - a clear linkage, even a conflation, is often made between the English concepts of "culture" and "education". I suggest that this indicates the priority which has traditionally been given to the written word in China. However, it should be added that there is also a term for "education" (**jiaoyu**). Since "**wenhua**" defies easy translation I use the Chinese term throughout.

[43]In 1993, some 183,000 people were reported to be employed in private enterprise in Shanghai (WHB 7 May 1993: 2). In the same year, a report stated that 1.5% of Shanghai's workforce was employed in the private sector, compared to a national figure of 2.4% (WHB 28 July 1993: 2).

to **getihu**.[44] In 1980s Huhhot, Jankowiak found "an attraction and a repulsion" toward the private sector" (1993: 78). In Shanghai, before about 1991 **getihu** were invariably described in morally negative terms as criminals (**fan ren**), crafty (**huatou**), improper (**bu zhengdang**), low class people (**xiaceng ren**), with low **wenhua** (culture/education)[45] and low moral quality (**suzhi di**) who rip people off (*tsɛ*/**zhan**), fool around with women, gamble and evade tax.[46] A local sociologist agreed that until recently people, and especially intellectuals, looked down on **getihu**. However, he noted a recent marked change in attitudes towards them. He explained that "**gaige kaifang** has introduced a new standard (**biaozhun**) and a new value (**jiazhi**), that of money - with money one can travel, go abroad, eat in big hotels and be a consumer of luxury items." In the consumerist nineties, money, rather than "good class" or party status has become a key determinant of social status. As a clerk in a state **danwei** told me, "everyone is thinking of ways to make money, because money is the most important thing now." A joint venture employee told me that "before only hooligans (**xiao liumang**) were **getihu**, now university intellectuals may be **getihu**."

More generally, a young businessman noted that previously manual and service work had been regarded as low status, but that now, for example, a hairdresser may be seen as high class (**gaodang**) and a bar worker have a high income which gives him status. It is ironic that in the Maoist era when state rhetoric advocated narrowing the gap between mental and manual labour that this distinction appears to have been reinforced. During the reform era, when such rhetoric has been jettisoned, comments such as this suggest progress in this direction, although my own impression is that this trend is limited. For instance, many people still expressed negative attitudes towards **getihu**. On one occasion, however, an intellectual who had outlined the usual negative stereotype added that "people usually say **getihu** have lots of money and are slippery types (**huatou**). But in practice, many are not wealthy and they face many problems such as arbitrary taxes and corrupt officials."

Several informants told me that an early indication of the start of **gaige kaifang** was the announcement that class struggle was over and that economic construction was

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[44]In 1988, the annual wage of salaried staff and workers in Shanghai was estimated to be 1,747¥, that of private entrepreneurs over 5,000¥ with some 10% having an annual income in excess of 10,000¥ (Wilson 1990: 58).

[45]See footnote 42 above.

[46]See also Susan Young (1991) on negative perceptions of **getihu**.

the central policy. The cessation of class labelling began to loosen up the social system. As one teacher told me, under the old system "many students' fate (**mingyun**) was fixed by the class label of their parents." The increased possibility to choose and change jobs were important new elements of choice. During the Maoist period workers had a high degree of job security but could also "be stuck forever in a very unpleasant work situation" (Parish & Whyte 1984: 33). From 1991, what is officially called the "mobility (literally "flow") of talent" (**rencai liudong**) and popularly referred to as **tiaocao** (literally "jump from one trough to another") became quite common. A state **danwei** employee contrasted the possibility to **tiaocao** with the situation "in Mao's time" when one could not change jobs but was just a "revolutionary screw" - a term which highlights both limited labour mobility and lack of individual choice. Even the term "labour market" now used by officials, would have been anathema until recently, implying, as it does, that labour is a commodity. Instead of being channelled into a job, graduating students can now find their own jobs. Policy changes have increased the range of choice by allowing part or wholly foreign-funded enterprises and private companies. Occupational mobility has also increased with job advertisements and, for instance, a removal of restrictions on moves from collective to state enterprises. In the past such moves could usually only be made via the "backdoor".

As a result of increased job mobility and the "flow of talent" educational establishments and professions such as medicine have lost staff to commercial companies which can pay higher salaries. A **Guangming Daily** article described this "brain drain" as caused by the move to the market economy and observed, for instance, that the "once preeminent Fudan University is beginning to stagnate."[47] The article concluded that the way to resolve this problem is to "let the market completely redistribute talented workers, putting them into jobs that give them the best opportunities to use their abilities." Following through the irrigation metaphor, one may see this as a notion that the waters unleashed by the sluice will naturally find their own level and not be wasted by being poured down the drain.

Side-Channelling Energies

[T]he rigid personnel system in the State sector still limits labour mobility and restrains talent flow [but] moonlighters can try whatever they think they are good at... Shanghai has about 5 million moonlighters...working in their free time as peddlars, waiters, private tutors, editors, PR staff members and consultants... Some sociologists say second jobs

[47]Translated in CD 17 July 1993: 4.

are, ultimately, a rebellious move against rigid administrative systems in the State sector... So far, the central government has kept its mouth shut on the issue. This tacitness, analysts say, has to do with the State's current policy to nurture its fledgling tertiary, or service industry.

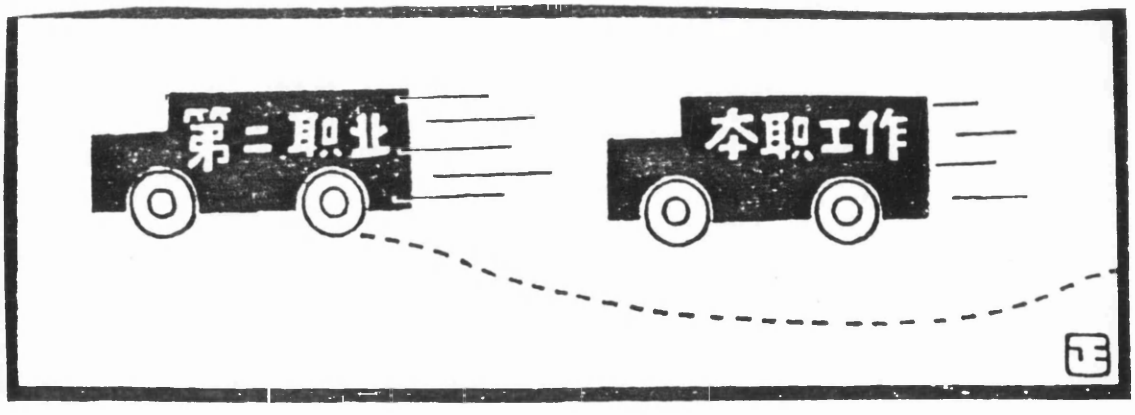
China Daily 8 March 1993: 4

This China Daily article further described the low wages and limited promotion prospects of state employees as key causes of moonlighting, citing a survey by the Ministry of Labour which "shows that State employees are idle for at least half of an 8-hour day." Finally, it noted that "most moonlighters do not really wish to discard their "iron rice bowls" and that "first jobs grant a sense of security." If the staggering figure of 5 million moonlighters is correct, and certainly many people I met were moonlighting, then most Shanghainese workers are engaged in this activity. Moreover, the list given does not even include those who deal in shares in the city's newly reestablished share market. At least 1-2 million Shanghainese have "thrown themselves into the share sea" (**touru le guhai**).[48] After a visit to Shanghai in 1843 Robert Fortune described the city as "essentially a mercantile city, and all the residents engaged in active business" (1853, Vol 1: 104). At times I felt that Shanghai could once again be described in this way.

[48]"**Yongjin Guchao de Nurenmen**" (The Women Who Surge into the Share Wave) NFZM 18 June 1993: 1.

Cartoon 1 Caption "The True and and the False"
Dozing figure is at his **danwei** job, second figure carries a suitcase labelled "second job".
(XMWB 8 December 1993)

Cartoon 2 Caption "Deformed"
The bucket in the left hand is labelled "own job", the one in the right hand "second job".
(XMWB 29 April 1993)



Cartoon 3 Caption "Illegally Overtaking"
The first truck is labelled "second job", the second truck "one's job" [i.e. one's state allocated job]
(XMWB 30 March 1993)

Viewed from one perspective increased job mobility is a new opportunity. However, many people changed jobs or took on second jobs because their salaries were insufficient. Furthermore, the policy allowing employees from collective enterprises to move to state **danwei** was indicative of the declining status of state **danwei**. State **danwei** employees told me that the sense of superiority (**youyuegan**) they once felt has disappeared since the mid-1980s. The main impediments to leaving a state **danwei** were the loss of welfare benefits (**laobao**) and job security. Reduced funding of state enterprises and the introduction of a contract system for new employees had eroded these entitlements or, at least, engendered the belief that they will deteriorate (see O'Leary 1992). On one occasion, during a conversation with a factory worker, a television news report mentioned that some state fruit stores have taken to other occupations because they cannot compete with **getihu**. He commented that "the state cannot outdo **getihu**."[49] This passing remark is a telling comment on the state's declining economic role.

Interstices

Before the reform period organizational and information structures were predominantly vertical, hierarchical and relatively discrete although mediated to an extent by personal connections (see chapter 3). Informants also described a situation where the reach of the state touched directly upon each individual. Space has now opened up for new forms of association. By the late 1980s a process was underway "that was fundamentally changing the nature of the state-society relationship" and "a nascent civil society was emerging and consolidating" (Whyte 1992: 93). In place of the former direct Party-unit/employee link various types of intermediary (**zhongjie**) organizations emerged. The state's role in enterprise management has been reduced and the former direct link replaced by a government-trade association-factory chain.[50] Similarly, the former direct government-individual link is now mediated by various organizations such as scholarly institutes and commercial federations. The role of broker has also been revived (see chapter 4). A flood of advice and "how-to" books has emerged with titles such as The Managing Strategy of Broker (*sic*) (**Jingjiren Jingying Fanglüe**).

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[49]In 1978, c.90% of urban retail sales were conducted in state stores; by 1987 only c.40% (Hartland-Thunberg 1989: 22).

[50]In 1993, there was a subtle but significant change in terminology - **guoying qiye** ("state enterprises") - implying state management - became **guo you qiye** ("state-owned enterprise") which are responsible for paying tax to the state.

There is greater space for civil society, particularly of a diffusely organized kind. The world of share dealers (see chapter 6) is a significant example of this. Share dealers rely upon contacts and information for their trading activities. Amongst wealthy dealers and share exchange managers I encountered, lunch at expensive restaurants appeared to be a frequent event. To these were invited colleagues and friends often employed in government departments and/or financial institutions. These meetings were clearly aimed at maintaining and creating "connections" and "oiling the hinges". More generally, some informants pointed to Shanghai's burgeoning restaurant scene as indicative of the city's revived role as a commercial "window" (**chuangkou**) - these are the places where business deals are done. However, such positive assessments of this conspicuous public eating were much rarer than negative comments by informants who regarded it, at best, as wasteful and often as evidence of corruption (see chapter 5).

Setting Sail

A term which has become fashionable since 1991-2 is **xiahai** (literally - put out to sea). It refers to cadres and intellectuals - people with **wenhua**) - who engage in business. Originally **xiahai** referred to an intellectual who went from being an amateur enthusiast of Peking opera (a **piaoyou**) to becoming a professional actor - this was called **piaoyou xiahai**. This dramatic analogy accords closely with the view of one informant that **gaige kaifang** provides a "stage" (**wutai**) on which individuals have the opportunity to give free reign to their talents. **Xiahai** had a derogatory connotation since actors were looked down upon by intellectuals. Some informants were unaware of this derivation of **xiahai** and provided imaginative etymologies. One teacher speculated that **xiahai** originally referred to pirates setting out on a raid. On a subsequent visit he again raised the topic of **xiahai**. It was worse, he noted, than he had realized. From conversations with friends he had "discovered" that **xiahai** originally meant for a girl to enter a brothel and become a prostitute.

Although such imaginative etymologies indicate that **xiahai** possesses at least a resonance of illicit behaviour most informants denied that **xiahai** retains a derogatory meaning. However one intellectual, well aware of the literary origin of **xiahai**, considered that the term is linked to **xiashui** meaning to "enter the water" or "take to evil doing" - he explained that "it is like when one is clean (**ganjing**) and then gets into water (**shui**), which is dirty." Both **xiahai** and **xiashui** share the meaning of "to head for the place with money" (**wang qian de difang zou**). I protested that water is clean but he drew attention

to a phrase which may describe a person who seeks self improvement: **ren wang gaochu zou, shui shang dichu liu** - humans aim for high places, water runs to low places. His interpretation is that water is ignoble (**bu guangcai**) and does not want face (**bu yao mianzi**), it runs downwards towards the **xialiu** - the lower reaches (also meaning "low-down, mean, obscene, dirty") - where all the dirty (**zang**) things are to be found.

Various factors provoked people to **xiahai**. A key motive was financial. Some considered prospects at their **danwei** too limited. Peer group pressure and media examples of successful money-makers could also be a spur to "set sail". By decreeing that workers' bonuses must now be earned by commercial activities within **danwei**, the state appeared to encourage such entrepreneurship. Informants also described **xiahai** as providing an opportunity to use personal talents (**fahui ziji de caineng**), some characterizing it as an opportunity to temper (**duanlian**) themselves. This reference to **duanlian** is an interesting instance of a word being given new content in a changed social environment. This term was popular in the Maoist era when people would "steel themselves" in "great revolutionary movements" (CED 1988: 169). Writing on rural Guangdong in the Cultural Revolution, Richard Madsen comments that **duanlian** was a term used by village leaders and activists and that it included the notion of "asceticism - spiritual exercise consciously and deliberately undertaken" (1984: 29-30)

Sinking

In contrast to those Shanghainese who have succeeded in the commercial "sea" many faced another type of **xia - xiagang**. Workers in unprofitable enterprises were given "early retirement" or laid off (**xiagang**) and told to "find their own way out" (**ziji zhao chulu**) of this problem. Workers who "stepped down from their posts" (**xiagang**) retained welfare entitlements but received only a percentage of their salaries. Typically, those who **xiagang** were less well-educated, middle aged women from the "lost generation" whose education had been disrupted during the Cultural Revolution. The number of **xiagang** workers is secret - the state closely guards such information. However, occasional news items mentioned factories laying off workers and my informants generally knew of people who had been laid off. As I note above, one **Xinmin Wanbao** article stated (in a small article buried on page 12) that around 100,000 female textile factory workers had "recently" **xiagang** in Shanghai. One informant described the extent of **xiagang** as analogous to a bowl with a crack in it through which its contents leak out - the "bowl" here being Shanghai's socio-economic structure. This would seem to be an apposite

analogy for the fate of the "iron rice bowl" in Shanghai.

The situation of **xiagang** workers, who in 1992-3 generally received less than 200¥ pcm, was extremely difficult especially if both spouses were laid off. The way in which **xiagang** was discussed confirms the conception of the **danwei** as a bounded, all encompassing entity. Workers who "come down" (**xialai**) are said to "go to society" (**dao shehui**). Many sought work in service sectors, setting up a street stall being a common "road out". The better qualified sought work in joint ventures. Some units set up subsidiary enterprises (**san zi qiye**) such as restaurants and redeployed workers in these. **Xiagang** workers who could not find alternative work often returned to their original jobs since **danwei** retain ultimate responsibility for them. I asked a share dealing room manager about the prospect of enterprise bankruptcies - which would sever such responsibilities. He responded that these were unlikely since the Party "still wants 'peace and stability' (**anding tuanjie**)" - an ironic comment upon a current Party slogan.

Although **xiagang** was a great threat for many workers, some considered it a welcome opportunity to leave a job they disliked. Drivers, in particular, often welcomed **xiagang** since their skills were in great demand. One factory worker told me that he was happy to **xiagang** since he would get half his wages, retain welfare entitlements and be able to take on a part time job which paid more than his original salary. In another case, a worker in a state **danwei** planned to volunteer to **xiagang** for several months in order to try out a job in a trading company. In this way **xiagang** provided a crucial security net.

1.3.5 Backwaters and Stagnant Pools - Lack of Change

One state worker commented that "**gaige kaifang** provides a stage (**wutai**) on which people can give full play to their talents (**shizhan caihua**)." However, she added that this was of little benefit to those who lacked talents and that this "stage" could often only be entered via the backdoor. Another young state worker told me, "there have been some big changes in Shanghai, but for those with no opportunities (**meiyou lu**) and without a way to make money their situation may be deteriorating." Desirable jobs included state trading and financial companies, joint venture and foreign-owned companies in which most of the best opportunities were open only to the young and well educated. Structural limits to occupational mobility still remained. In particular, the provision of housing and welfare benefits was still largely tied to **danwei** membership. In addition, some workers who moved jobs and, for instance, trainee teachers, who did not take up job

assignments, had to pay compensation.

State **danwei** workers I encountered often conveyed the impression that little had changed in their enterprises. One informant described them as "like machines whose motor has stopped, and which continue to move only through residual momentum (**guanxing**)." A young man who had moved from a state **danwei** to a joint venture observed that **gaige kaifang** had brought few changes to his former **danwei**. He added that "the changes one sees in Shanghai are due to joint ventures and foreign owned enterprises." Similarly, a local government cadre told me that "despite the constant talk about **gaige kaifang**, it's still just the same old situation" (**lao yangzi**). It seems that the stereotypical state **danwei** where workers "have a cup of tea, smoke a cigarette, and read the newspaper" still survived. Indeed, when I asked this cadre if he was busy at work he responded "not at all, now it's **gaige kaifang**. The government is relaxed now, it doesn't want us to do much." He added that "**gaige kaifang** brings some problems" including plans for cuts in local government bureaucracy. He considered his future prospects difficult to predict (**yuliao**) but was not worried since "there is always food to eat, the state will always arrange something - they won't make you unemployed." This man was in the process of applying for Communist Party membership. He expected that this would "make everything rather better." For example, he would get a higher salary, an increased bonus and more chance of promotion. It is notable that few younger informants considered this strategy. Indeed, this man remarked that his own son considered his joining the Party as "stupid".

Many state workers appeared to have a lackadaisical attitude to their jobs. With little opportunity to vent their frustrations workers may **chugong bu chuli** - go to work but not expend energy. A factory worker in his early thirties told me that in his job he just **hun** - wastes time - all day (cf. Scott 1990). Instead of working contentedly (**anxin gongzuo**) many workers' efforts and energies were channelled into a second job or sideline activities such as share dealing. In addition, the possibility of making money elsewhere had introduced subtle changes into the workplace. For instance, a woman with various sideline occupations commented that she would not obey her **danwei** leader since her salary was too low. However, not all workers could engage in such activities. A 38 year old electrician on a salary of 280¥ who described his **danwei** as "still an 'iron rice bowl'" told me that he had neither the time nor the energy for a second job - each day he spent four hours crossing the city by bus commuting from his home to his **danwei**.

1.3.6 Rising Tides - Living Standards and Consumerism

For many, probably a majority of Shanghai residents, the most important consequence, and indeed the very connotation of **gaige kaifang** was that living standards (**shenghuo shuiping** - literally "life water level") had risen.[51] As a proverb states: when the river rises the boat goes up - particular things improve with the improvement of the general situation (**shui zhang chuan gao**). Incomes generally were higher, with an average monthly income of 343.71¥ in the period January-September 1993, a rise of over 19% after inflation from the same period in 1992.[52] Along with a much greater range and quantity of consumer items there has been a "consumer flood in the 1990s."[53]

Cartoon 4 Caption "What The Eyes Don't See, Does Not Perturb One" The articles have labels such as "Parisian perfume 26,000¥", "famous brand name shirt 1,800¥", "imported leather jacket 25,000¥", "luxurious diamond watch 120,000¥", and "English lipstick 22,000¥". (XMWB 5 December 1993)

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[51]Similarly in the Chinese countryside (see Croll 1994: 220).

[52]"Gap Between Poor and Rich Growing" CDBW 28 Nov-4 Dec 1993: 3.

[53]"**Jiushi Niandai Xiaofeichao Toushi**" (Perspectives on the Consumer Flood in the 1990s) WHDYSB 5 June 1993: 7.

Alongside increasing prosperity were complaints that those who relied upon salaries could not join the "flood of consuming famous brand names which are 'gushing'"[54] into Shanghai or enjoy the proliferation of entertainments such as karaoke. One informant noted that he saw consumption levels increase whilst he collected his pension and his income decreased. Some informants described the vast increase in restaurant consumption as "abnormal" (**bu zhengchang**) and beyond the pockets of ordinary salaried people. Lavish restaurant eating was associated primarily with private entrepreneurs or the (mis)use of public funds. Growing commercialization had brought what one informant described as an "economic pressure" (**jingji yali**) and an increasing pressure of material goods (**wuzhi yali**).

1.4. Flood Water, Dangerous Currents, Murky Depths and Whirlpools

In official Chinese rhetoric the Cultural Revolution was "ten years of chaos". Many people I encountered in Shanghai endorsed this view. However, I also heard people describe their present as "chaotic". Indeed some asserted that there was more "chaos" in the early 1990s than during the Cultural Revolution. I consider that following through the watery metaphors and attention to the differing meanings of the term **luan** can help to account for these seemingly irreconcilable representations.

The term **luan** has a wide range of meanings which include: "in disorder, in confusion; upheaval, chaos, riot, unrest; confuse, mix up, jumble; confused (state of mind); indiscriminate, random, arbitrary; promiscuous sexual behaviour, promiscuity" (CED 1988: 447). When people described the Cultural Revolution as **luan** this may be a different kind of **luan** to that portrayed in early 1990s Shanghai. For instance, Cultural Revolution **luan** referred primarily to political campaigns. In contemporary Shanghai the term was used, for example, of declining public morality, rising crime, the transportation system and increasing prostitution. The demonstrations of May-June 1989 are officially described as "chaos" or "turmoil" (**dongluan**), a term most informants also used - although a minority called it a "student movement" (**xuechao** - "student wave").

A magazine editor told me that **gaige kaifang** in Shanghai lacks order (**wuxu**) and used a local saying to describe its unpredictable effects: when you step on a water melon peel, where you fall is where you end up (**jiao ta xiguapi, huadao nali suan dao nali**). People often seemed to conceive of **gaige kaifang** as having a momentum of its own. Like water surging through a sluice it may bring life giving energy to parched earth but it may

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[54] "'**Mingpai' Xiaofeichao Nengfou Chijiu?**" (Can the Flood of Consuming 'Famous Brand Names' Endure?) WHB 13 May 1993: 7.

also wash away seedlings and even the soil itself. In the first part of this section I examine three aspects which many informants felt had been washed away or, at least, diluted in the flood - the power of the Communist Party, culture and morality, and certainty and security. I then turn to some of the dangerous currents and murky depths of the reform era.

1.4.1 Washed Away in the Flood

The reform period has been marked by a dilution of the power and influence (*sic*) of the Communist Party with a "tremendous erosion in the central government's control over basic financial and administrative levers" (Swaine 1990: 24).[1] During the 1980s there was evidence of "political society" reemerging. Anita Chan perceived a mushrooming of lobby and interest groups independent of CCP control and commented that "a nascent civil society is emerging in China" (1989: 81). A common way to express this depoliticization and withdrawal of the Party from people's everyday lives was that China now had a "large society" and a "small government" (**da shehui, xiao zhengfu**). My ability to conduct research in the PRC and visit people's homes was (as informants often noted) indicative of depoliticization. Many of the previous forms of surveillance and indoctrination had become ineffective.[2] "Class" labelling, which was dominant as a distinctive classificatory and organizing feature of social life from the early 1950s ceased in the late 1970s. Political study used to be compulsory and frequent in Shanghai **danwei**. One woman told me that during the Cultural Revolution her **danwei** had spent three and a half days and three evenings per week on political study but "now only half a day per week." Some state **danwei** had ceased study sessions altogether. I was told by workers at one large state **danwei** that their unit had not had study sessions even in the period after June 4.

In educational units Friday afternoon was still reserved for political study. However, its effectiveness was clearly limited. On one occasion I asked a teacher to explain the meaning of several propaganda phrases used daily in the media. To my surprise she did not know. She explained that although her school still had political study it was very different to that in the past. She characterized these sessions as "someone reads some document for a while, we then all begin to grumble about how long it took to get there on the bus and how much food prices have risen." It would seem that, at least at times, the

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[1] In June 1995, Hu Angang, senior fellow of the Beijing Academy of Science warned that "China is risking collapse from fiscal weakness". In 1994, central government revenues accounted for 5.1% of GDP, against 6.8% in 1992 and over 9% in 1992; in Britain the equivalent figure was around 35% (FT 16 June 1995: 6).

[2] "Space" beyond the reach of the state seems to have begun to grow from the late 1960s onwards with the emergence, for example, of juvenile gang subculture (Parish & Whyte 1984: 272-3).

Communist Party speaks a language ordinary people literally do not understand. They are no longer taught it, nor is it required or enforced that they should know it. In joint ventures, foreign owned companies and for Shanghai's newly emergent economic status groups such as share dealers and **getihu** the Party had even less relevance.

A common view was that until after the Cultural Revolution extra caution had to be exercised in comments made when a Party member was present. This was no longer the case with ordinary Party members. A retired man recalled that in the early 1950s Party members were said to be "special material" (**tesu cailiao**). However, in his estimation, if one said this to a Party member now they would suspect sarcasm! In popular perceptions people now joined the Party to gain some personal advantage and may be embarrassed about their membership. Party membership still brought certain advantages - party members generally were described to me as being "one level higher" than everybody else. For instance, they had more chance to obtain jobs in the media. It was also a source of complaint that retired cadres (**lixiu**) received higher entitlements than ordinary retired (**tuixiu**) people. However, during the reform era alternative routes to success had emerged. A Party member in his early sixties told me that "until the reform era there was an official standard (**guan benwei** - **benwei** = standard, as in gold standard) but now there is a money standard (**jinqian benwei**)." He explained that social status had been dependent upon the level of a person's official title (**zuo guan duoshao**), but "now one's income is the main criterion just like in the West."

Cartoon 5 Caption "Before Retiring (**lixiu**)"
A cadre busy making the most of his power as a bureaucratic gatekeeper before he retires.
(XMWB 12 November 1993)

Residents' Committees formerly acted as neighbourhood surveillance units. If one adopts Vivienne Shue's (1988) notion of the reach of the state, these basic level organizations constituted its eyes, ears and fingertips. In Shanghai these Committees had lost their political role - although some informants felt that this could be reactivated if the state considered it necessary. Instead, with **gaige**, many Residents' Committees engaged in commercial activities. There was visible evidence in countless alley entrances which had small enterprises such as shops, noodle stalls or hairdressers run by Residents' Committees. Profits paid the bonuses of Committee workers and helped fund their activities. Older women were the main activists in these Committees and the elderly the main beneficiaries of their activities. Often these recipients complained that local Committees entrepreneurial activities conflicted with their primary functions, for instance, of maintaining standards of hygiene - making money rather than serving the people had become their key concern. As Parish and Whyte I too found that Residents' Committees generated "little enthusiasm, interest, or loyalty" (1984: 290).

Despite the depoliticization outlined above and the general "decline of ideologically sanctioned authority" (Walder 1992: 113), there remained barriers and limits to political reform.[57] One local level cadre, keen to join the Party for his own personal advantage, told me that political reform was limited since it always came up against the interest of officials (**pengdao guan de li**). Many people had limited expectations of political reform. Apathy and a sense of helplessness were the main reactions to politics. The more politically engaged contrasted the extent of change in the economic structure with the lack of political change. The limits to change are made clear in the state's retention of the "Four Basic Principles" enunciated by Deng Xiaoping in March 1979: to keep to the socialist road, to uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat, the continued leadership of the CCP, and adherence to Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong thought. Some perceived a fundamental contradiction between the continued enunciation of these Principles and future economic progress. One academic told me that "if the Communist Party does not collapse it will break (**weifan**) historical laws (**lishi guilu** - others spoke of economic laws - **jingji guilu**)." It is interesting to speculate on the degree to which such commonly held

[57]cf. Tony Saich's (1991) essay "Much Ado About Nothing: Party Reform in the 1980s". In retrospect, the high tide for political reform appears to have been reached during the 13th CCP Congress in October 1987 (see Oksenberg 1987). In his report to the Congress the CCP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang - who lost this position after June 4, 1989 - proposed various political reforms including a separation of party and government. He also broke new ground by suggesting that "[d]ifferent groups of people may have different interests and views, and they too need opportunities and channels for the exchange of ideas" (Ibid: 13). The implications of Zhao's remarks were profound since they represented a tacit acceptance of the virtues of pluralism.

beliefs in economic determinism, here invoked for the demise of the Communist Party, are derived from several decades of compulsory classes in Marxism.

Although many informants believed that a replacement of "rule by man" (**renzhi**) with "rule by law" (**fazhi**) would improve problems such as corruption it was widely felt that democracy and a free press would be detrimental. Informants generally considered Western style democracy an admirable ideal but impractical for China where it would promote chaos (**luan**). Factors cited to support this view included the Communist Party's antipathy to democracy - one informant remarked that "the Communist Party fears democracy as it wants to use power to gain personal advantage (**yiquan mosi**). They do not want to lose the opportunity to make money." Intellectuals described the **laobaixing** as neither wishing, nor being ready, for democracy since their **wenhua** level (**wenhua shuiping**) and moral quality (**suzhi**) were too low. "The result of direct elections would be chaos" one university lecturer told me. He saw a crucial contradiction in that he considered corruption the key problem in China and that this required democratization (**minzhuhua**) and press freedom to deal with it. But he also believed political stability to be essential and that press freedom would undermine this. A younger lecturer noted that "in China now money can do everything. So even if there was a democratic system the big bosses would buy votes and those with the most money would form the government."

One informant hoped that the tidal wave of **gaige kaifang** would "flush away" (**chongdiao**) the Communist Party altogether. Some anticipated that the reforms will wash away the Communist Party within some fifteen or twenty years. The path to this end was portrayed in widely divergent ways from gradual development bolstered by an inevitable logic of the deepening of the market economy to bloody confrontation resulting from a growing contradiction between economic change and lack of political reform. A man who had studied abroad in the 1920s felt that "China is still a sleeping lion. One day it will wake up. However, it will need a great revolution for this to happen." In his view this political reform will only come some decades hence when a younger generation of political leaders who have studied in the West hold the reins of power.

Culture and Morality

Complaints were often made, especially by older people, that traditional culture, values and morality had been washed away. In the 1970s in Chen Village in Guangdong, Madsen described a "disintegration of the village's public spirit" (1984: 242). Intellectuals

pointed to ideals of earlier periods such as those of Confucianism,[58] the "Three People's Principles" proposed by Sun Yat-sen or those of socialism - they considered that these ideals had all been rejected or devalued and only the desire for money had replaced them. Madsen writes of the "moral vacuum created by the destructive cultural chaos of the Cultural Revolution" (28). In 1970s urban China, Parish and Whyte found "increasing disillusionment" and that "the emphasis on class struggle and random political attacks had destroyed a sense of participation in a grand national purpose" (1984: 320). Amongst youth, in particular, they found evidence of increased alienation (323-31). A common assessment of my informants was that even those moral values which were sustained in the Cultural Revolution had withered in the rush for money of the reform era (see also chapter 4). One academic, using the expression made famous by Sun Yat-sen, described China as like a plate of loose sand (**yi pan san sha** - in a state of disunity) with people just going after money. Even those supportive of **gaige kaifang** felt that values still upheld during Mao's time had been lost. For example, a university lecturer remarked that in the past "people were modest (**qianxu**), now what counts is who can boast (**ziwo chuipeng**) the most, now the self is much stronger (**ziwo qiang de duo**)." Rising divorce statistics and extra-marital affairs were cited as evidence of this.

Commercialism was felt to have entered many aspects of life (see Gold 1985: 662-4), from cultural activities to the choice of marriage partners. University students, for instance, eschewed courses in history and philosophy for "hot" subjects such as English, business and accountancy. Intellectuals complained that "serious literature" could not get published whilst pulp fiction including pirated foreign novels with sex and violence dominated the market. One elderly man thought that China had adopted only the negative features of capitalism such as speculative share buying. State rhetoric urged citizens to seize the opportunity provided by the times (**zhuazhu shiji**). Enterprising individuals had taken this advice and "pushed the boat along with the current" (**shunshui tui zhou** - make use of an opportunity to gain one's end) - they attempted to make as much money as possible. Many complained that people made money by improper means (*lo*/**lao** - also dredge, fish for, scoop up from the water). Concerns were expressed about the way that everyone was now supposed to make money. For instance, many considered it inappropriate for doctors and teachers to engage in business. It was seen as detrimental, even immoral, for them to expend their time and energies on making money and neglect their proper duties.

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[58]See also Madsen (1990 Chapter 10 "The Spiritual Crisis of China's Intellectuals").

Cartoon 6 "Untitled"
Child is saying "Teacher this is my name card."
(XMWB 16 November 1993)

Cartoon 7 Caption "The Face of the Market"
Crammed in-between "fresh sea food hot pot" and a "karaoke" is the "book shop".
(XMWB 16 November 1993)

A local sociologist likened Shanghai's indigenous culture during **gaige kaifang** to that of American Indians during the period of European colonization - it was being washed away. Older informants complained that the influx of "foreign culture" such as karaoke, Michael Jackson records and disco dancing had edged out indigenous arts. However, one expectation was that traditional arts (**gudai wenhua**) which had gone abroad would be reimported to China (**chukou zhuan neixiao**) once the economy had developed.

Certainty and Security

The washing away of party power and influence, of culture and morality, were key factors which had reduced certainty. A stagnant pond may not be especially desirable and being stuck in a rut may be monotonous but at least they provide clearly defined boundaries and certainties. In Shanghai, as in the countryside there was the "onset of uncertainty, unpredictability and anxiety" (Croll 1994: 223). Many Shanghainese I encountered looked back on the Maoist period, and especially the early 1950s, with nostalgia. It was represented to me as a time of good order, moral certainties and clear, shared national and community aims. Older people in particular lamented the loss of these clear distinctions. For instance, Chinese society was perceived to have been divided into a limited range of clearly differentiated, morally good and bad classes. In the 1990s, many were perturbed by the blurring of statuses as the whole population went into business (**quanmin jingshang**). During 1992-94, Shanghainese frequently advised me that "now is the

ideal time to do business in China" and expected me to **xiahai**. A university lecturer observed that "there has to be a division of labour in a society, there is in Western capitalist countries and there should be in China too. Things always go to extremes in China. In the past everyone had to study Lei Feng and Dazhai. Now everyone is encouraged to **xiahai**." A journalist suggested to me that China was exceeding the proper limits in righting a wrong (**jiaowang guozheng**).

There was increasing uncertainty over remuneration levels - a matter I elaborate on below. In addition, inflation resurfaced in the 1980s as a significant problem. It was a major factor behind the 1989 demonstrations. With the "market economy" food prices varied daily and store prices were no longer fixed but differed from store to store.

Cartoon 8 Caption "Consumer"
The body is labelled "real price" and
the ever-emerging heads "false price".
(XMWB 18 December 1992)

The fear of unemployment was returning to Shanghai, with many thousands being laid-off. Those in previously secure and well-provided large state enterprises wondered what the future might bring as they saw their job security and welfare benefits eroded. As elsewhere in China, crime is one of the big "growth industries" (Dutton 1992: 200) of the reform era and many of my informants expressed concern over rising crime.[59] Most of

[59]Parish & Whyte found evidence in the early 1970s, before the reform era, of "serious deterioration in what was once an orderly and safe urban scene" (1984: 256).

this was blamed upon Shanghai's "floating population". As China's national "door" opened so many families I visited had recently installed outer metal doors (**tiemen**) to their flats. A **Jiefang Ribao** article reported on the increasing number of children who suffered from "lonely disease" (**gudubing**).[60] It attributed this to the way that "more and more households are becoming closed style (**fengbixing**)" with families locked in by doors and steel gates and "distanced (**gekai**) from the outside world." The article described this pattern as partly due to the one child policy but more importantly as due to improved living standards and more household entertainments such as television and video. Clearly these are significant factors, though informants' rationale for fitting such metal doors was invariably fear of crime.

A more general uncertainty concerned the future. Many Shanghainese expressed concern over chaos in the form of increasing inequality, corruption, inflation and crime - problems often considered even more severe elsewhere in China. Such phenomena were attributed to an interrelated combination of the party-state's weakened controls over the populace, for example, the increasingly ineffective household registration system and as inevitable growths associated with a transitional stage between a planned socialist economy and the socialist market economy. Many expressed fear that this chaos may become more severe after the death of Deng Xiaoping. In marked distinction to Western concern over lack of free speech and democracy in China, I gained the strong impression that many of the problems which worried my informants derived not from the party-state being too powerful and intrusive but rather its weakness and/or its failure to maintain the firm moral guidelines it espouses.

Uncertainty over China's future national path and Shanghai's prospects were often cited as factors underlying short-termism. The stereotype of rich **getihu** was that they wantonly consumed their wealth (**luan chi luan yong**) on meals, women and leisure activities rather than accumulate it to use in increasing production. Fear of a change in policy such as the confiscation of private property in the 1950s was one reason given for this short-termism. A worker in a joint venture felt that "people in Shanghai don't know what will happen in two or three years time so they spend freely and have a good time whilst they can." Similarly, a retired lecturer told me that he would not buy his flat because "in China one cannot make any plans beyond the next three years. Who knows what the policy will be then? China is not stable like England or America." Many ventures adopted a maximum two or three year time-scale since the opportunity might not

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[60]JFRB 13 June 1993: 10.

last and there may be troubled times (**luanshi**) ahead. Ventures such as restaurants were said to be particularly popular since they offered a rapid return on capital.

1.4.2 Dangerous Currents

*Law-abiding (**guigui juju de**) **laobaixing** who rely on a salary are not rich. There are no ordinary **laobaixing** in Shanghai's restaurants. All those who eat in them do so at the state's expense or are **getihu**. **Getihu** only make money because they evade tax, cheat people, exploit loopholes in state policy (**zuan guojia de kongzi**) and have connections with the police. Large scale corruption has the backing of high cadres. The KMT house was rotten (le te/**landiao**). It had to be demolished and rebuilt from scratch. It has again reached this state.*

Retired man's comment

People I encountered within Shanghai generally supported **gaige kaifang** and acknowledged the improved standard of living associated with these policies. However, this did not preclude concern and complaints about problems which were considered to have emerged or become more serious during the reform era. This included increasing inequality, unfairness, corruption and sleaze. These phenomena were considered detrimental to the **shehui fengqi** ("social atmosphere") of Shanghai. **Shehui fengqi** is not easily translated into English - note the problems outlined above in translating **feng**. It encompasses prevailing norms, morals, standards of behaviour and, more generally, the "spirit of the age" or *zeitgeist*. I begin this section by examining popular perceptions of increasing unfairness and inequality and then turn to corruption and sleaze - part of an "unhealthy tendency" (**bu zheng zhi feng** - literally "a dishonest or (morally) bad wind") which had filled the vacuum where public morality had been washed away.

Inequality

Although average incomes have risen during the 1990s, the gap between rich and poor has increased dramatically and complaints about newly emerging inequalities were legion. Before the reform era most workers had just one source of income with relatively fixed, clear and egalitarian rates of pay. In 1990s Shanghai, a radically different picture presented itself. Within state enterprises basic salary differentials had not widened greatly - indeed there appears to have been convergence between collective and state **danwei** (see Walder 1990: 139). However, enterprises had increased powers to pay differential bonuses and other payments and these could differ considerably even within one sector. In early 1993, middle school teachers I met from different schools were paid from as little as 300¥ pcm to over 1,000¥. In the latter instance, the school made considerable profits from leasing out its land as shop fronts - the resulting income of newly recruited teachers at this

school was higher than that of head teachers in some Shanghai schools. In addition to high salary bonuses this school's teachers also regularly received free products and foodstuffs, special bonuses on all public holidays, free restaurant meals and holidays.

Beyond the state sector, income differentials had widened even more dramatically. The manager of a factory which became a joint venture in 1992 told me that previously managers earned just 5-6% more than shop floor workers. Within one year a middle manager's salary was roughly twice that of a worker's - whose salary doubled in the same period - at about 1,200¥. In early 1993, average salaries of a state factory worker were around 400-500¥, about 600-800¥ for a joint venture employee and 1,200¥ in a solely foreign owned enterprise. However, comparing income levels is extremely problematic since most of the latter two types of enterprise would not provide housing and had less extensive welfare benefits.

Hill Gates (1991), with reference to Chengdu, argues that the June 4 massacre enabled the leadership to reassert far more stringent controls on the private accumulation of capital. However, this was the exact opposite of the situation I found in 1990s Shanghai where an especially remarkable feature was the emergence of a new wealthy strata (a subject explored further in Chapter 6). At the same time certain sections of society had become more vulnerable and face declining incomes, including workers in factories with low efficiency, workers laid off from enterprises and the elderly.

A visible sign of inequality (**bu pingdeng**) was the plethora of recently opened or refurbished opulent restaurants - during 1992-3 some 3,600 restaurants opened within one year, an average of ten per day. A man of 70 remarked on the way such restaurants have huge tables full of food. He believed that those who could afford this had got rich through profiteering and speculation (**touji daoba**) and added that "our flesh is cut out by them" (**women de rou bei tamen guadiao**). In a similar vein, an informant told me about a restaurant in Zhapu Road which had just been rented for 200,000¥ per year. He commented that "this shows how much restaurant owners must rip-off customers to make a profit - 200,000¥ represents one hundred years salary for an ordinary worker."

Many regarded rising inequality as a divisive factor - it clearly aroused considerable resentment. Several informants noted a saying of Mencius: do not fear if all are poor, fear only inequality (**bu huan pin, zhi huan bu jun**). A retired teacher, a Party member, told me that Deng Xiaoping had tried to get rid of this belief. He added, "Deng says that some should get rich first and the rest will become rich later. But the **laobaixing** do not believe this." In the next section I examine complaints of the unfairness which was widely felt to

lie behind inequalities.

Unfairness

A common refrain was that "honest" **(laoshi) laobaixing** who stuck to the rules **(guigui juju de)** remained poorly off, whilst wealthy people had achieved their riches via irregular **(bu zhengdang)** even crooked means **(wai luzi)**. A local playwright in his late thirties said that "previously one could not exploit **(boxue)**. Now, with **gaige kaifang**, if you have the ability you can exploit, only those without ability do not exploit." Some informants included morally positive factors in their assessment of who had derived advantages from **gaige kaifang**, they were those who have talent **(caineng)**, ability **(nengli)** and work hard **(qinlao)**. More morally ambiguous factors mentioned were those with lots of contacts **(shehui guanxi)** and the sharp witted **(tounao huo de ren)**. Those who lacked connections felt themselves to be at a great disadvantage. A journalist complained to me that everybody was going into business describing it as a retrograde step **(tuibu)** since it does not contribute to society **(dui shehui gongxian bu hao)**. However, his next remark was "I would go into business if I could, but I lack connections."

A more dominant theme was a stress upon negative factors best summed up by the expression: **ren wu huang, cai wu fa** - a person who does not commit some evil act, will not become rich. There seemed to be strong popular perception that the rich were often those who had transgressed across moral space; they had "crossed the sea by a trick" **(man tian guo hai** - practice deception). The wealthy were described as those with power and influence **(you quan you shi de ren)**, speculators **(touji)**, the crooked, those with "black hearts" **(xinhei)** and those able to exploit loopholes **(zuan kongzi)**. One informant commented that "**zuan** goes on at all levels, **danwei zuan** workers, regions **zuan** the state and so on." In addition, Shanghai's *nouveaux riches* were generally considered to make little contribution to society.

Two groups often represented as unfairly wealthy were high-level cadres **(gaogan)** and their families, and **getihu**. Many people expressed resentment at the advantages and privileges enjoyed by high-level Party members. They were felt to have access to "roads" denied to ordinary people. For instance, one informant noted that "before there were no shares, now Deng Xiaoping's son can get ten thousand unlisted shares and sell them at a huge profit when they go on the market." Even once they retire, for instance, they may be handsomely paid as "advisors" to **danwei**.

Intellectuals, in particular, complained that the wrong people (i.e. not themselves?)

become wealthy. When I asked one academic about Shanghai's *nouveaux riches* he responded with the (rhetorical) question *sa nin fu la*/**shenme ren fu le**? - who is rich? He described remuneration levels as chaotic (**hunluan**) with, for example, a receptionist "without **wenhua**" in a big hotel earning 2,000¥ a month - three times as much as a university professor - "just because she has a pretty face." Popular rhymes expressed feelings of unfairness, for example: **long naodai limian de qian, meiyou gao naodai waimian de duo** - those who deal with the outside of the head [i.e. hairdressers] earn more than those who deal with its inside [i.e. brain surgeons]. A university lecturer described **getihu** as "mostly ex-criminals who could not get any other sort of job. A **getihu** makes his living by ripping people off. An honest, upright (**zhengzheng jingjing**) person would not become a **getihu**."

1.4.3 Murky Depths

In the introduction to this thesis I drew attention to informants' comments on the extent of "doors" and "curtains" in Chinese society which mask or hide the "real" situation. Some informants, although supportive of **gaige kaifang**, were sceptical about its apparent results describing them as superficial (**biaomian**), a false appearance (**jiaxiang**), or simply fake (**xujia**). One interviewee advised me that "in China on the surface things are one way, but the reality is always very different." I witnessed this at first hand during the East Asian Games. Dilapidated houses beside a main road had their facades painted over or were obscured by large, colourful advertising hoardings. At the same time as hiding these buildings from the tourist gaze, the occupants were denied light and visibility. The sense of being unable to trust the evidence of one's own eyes was strongly conveyed in an informant's comment that "Shanghai's economy is like a kaleidoscope (**xiyangjing**) - through the rotating, coloured glass a beautiful scene is revealed. However, if this glass is broken the picture looks very ordinary." In this informant's view one must strip off the camouflage (**chaichuan xiyangjing**) and expose what lies beneath.

Several informants believed that Shanghai has a bubble economy (**paomo jingji**) which may suddenly burst. One intellectual drew a parallel between **gaige kaifang** and the Great Leap Forward when reports were also all of increasing production and successes. He felt convinced that current reports presented an equally false appearance and will produce a similar result with economic collapse (**kuatai**). In his view Deng Xiaoping will leave behind an awful mess (**lan tanzi** - "a rotten or messy [street] stall"), a mess which none of China's future potential leaders appeared capable of clearing up. He concluded that

China is like a water melon which looks perfectly sound from the outside but is rotten inside. Another informant who felt that Shanghai's apparent economic flourishing was superficial remarked that much money goes on building large hotels and projects such as the Nanpu bridge. He considered such projects as designed to make Shanghai appear prosperous - especially to foreigners - and likened it to the way a person may *gue pa dü*/**guan paitou** - "display a rich and arrogant manner to show off one's wealth or status" (Creamer 1991: 133). At the same time, the financial state of many state enterprises remains secret - published figures being specially doctored and "accurate" figures for internal use only. A former Rightist concluded that "China is not stable, the improvements are all superficial. For now the problems are all suppressed, who knows what tomorrow will bring."

A popular perception was that many joint ventures were fake - set up solely by local businessmen because the state gave them preferential treatment such as tax breaks. Some of these ventures were believed to be fronts for the offspring of high cadres **(gaogan zidi)** - including the so-called "princes party" **(taizi dang)**, the children of the highest level CCP leaders - to engage in real estate and other deals. In other instances "suitcase companies" **(pibao gongsi)** with no more to their name than business cards wheel and deal "buying empty and selling empty" **(maikong maikong)**. A similar problem was the proliferation of counterfeit goods such as fake foreign cigarettes and famous Chinese spirits. In popular mythology (and considerable evidence supports this) the offspring of high cadres **(gaogan)** were believed to control many highly profitable companies using their private connections to enrich themselves. The increasingly "blurred borderline between state bureaucrat and private merchant" (Solinger 1992: 126), such as way many government departments set up commercial companies - so called "flipped-plate companies" **(fanpai gongsi)** - was felt to involve corruption.[61] The military is also a major economic actor controlling many enterprises from hotels to clothing factories and discotheques.[62] This involvement is often secretive, hidden from the public gaze, a distinct case of closed rather than "open" doors. As one informant commented, "who knows what the Chinese economy is really like?"

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[61]Official rhetoric also accepts this as a problem. See, for instance, "'*Fanpai* companies' Must Sever Their Former Ties" CD 23 November 1993: 4.

[62]According an FT report the PLA is the largest distributor of pharmaceuticals in China ("When Doing Business Can Be Bloody" 18 July 1995: 6).

摇身一变还是婆婆 张滨 画 (原载《中国青年报》)

Cartoon 9 Caption "A Sudden Change of Identity And It's Still Mother-in-Law" The two-headed figure has two identities - one as "state bureau", the second as "corporation". The second figure is labelled "enterprise". (In Shanghai, **popo** (mother-in-law) is a slang term for a boss)
(XMWB 1 August 1993)

One informant described **gaige kaifang** as having producing great changes which were making the situation in Shanghai increasingly complicated (**fuza**) and dark (**heian**), quite the reverse of the bright, open and clear (**guangming**) future that many hoped for. Many of the aspects he referred to were the consequence of reform measures implemented in work units. For example, he noted that previously a **danwei** head (**toutou**) could only sack somebody for committing some offence, now they could dismiss an employee without a reason. Bosses could now recruit relatives and friends, whereas previously they could not as workers were assigned. Bonuses and salaries given to each worker were increasingly a matter of secrecy. In his view this should be a better means of encouraging workers. However, "since the money given out is the state's and not the boss's own, he can give it to those he favours and not necessarily those who work well. In this way with **gaige kaifang** graft (**tanwu**) is overt (**gongkai**)." He also criticized the growing and huge extent of eating at public expense which often went under the guise of "reception fees for guests."

A factory worker outlined the situation at her **danwei**. Superficially the factory appeared to be prospering - the boss appeared on television, ate leisurely meals at expensive restaurants and had a car bought by the **danwei**. However, she complained that she and half the workforce had been laid off and that many Shanghai **danwei** were like hers - "mere skeletons". City workers at the factory were laid off and production secretly transferred to the countryside with the profits made going to him personally and not the enterprise. This woman remarked that "the bosses just pull connections, eat, drink and have a good time (**chihe wanle**) while the actual work is done by country bumpkins (*a xiang*/**ah xiang**)."

Previously everyone knew fairly accurately other people's incomes. With the "Open Door" this openness was being replaced by opaqueness and even concealment with people's incomes shifting from the public to the private sphere. I noted earlier that state enterprises had increased powers to pay differential bonuses and other payments. These were sometimes described as "indistinct salary" (**mohu gongzi**). For example, the tradition of giving out red packets of money (**hongbao**) at occasions such as Chinese New Year had proliferated. As one informant commented, "the lowest level workers (**xiao balazi**) may receive 200-500¥ but no one knows what the bosses (**toutou**) get. It may be ten or twenty thousand ***yuan***." The incomes of those such as **getihu** and share dealers were particularly hard to ascertain - a small sprinkling of multi-millionaires was included in their ranks. Many ordinary people also had sources of income apart from their salary. This "outside money" (*na kua*/**waikuai**) or "grey income" (**huise shouru** - **hui** meaning both "grey" and "ambiguous") may come from, for example, share dealing, moonlighting or money sent from relatives abroad. It could also include more illicitly obtained income, for example, from embezzlement.

1.4.4 Dirty Water, Flotsam and Jetsam

Corruption

Corruption was considered by many Shanghainese to be endemic. It was also an "object of constant complaint."[63] Frequent newspaper editorials and official pronouncements attacked corruption and those who take "crooked roads" (**wailu**). However, people I encountered were sceptical of their efficacy believing that corruption originated from and was most serious amongst powerful sectors of society which were beyond the reach of investigators. A widespread belief was that high cadres and their families were the main beneficiaries of **gaige kaifang**. During the 1989 protests this transgression of moral boundaries, **guandao** - official corruption - was a central target of demonstrators' anger. A strong current of resentment persisted over officials who used their power to enrich themselves (**yiquan mosi**). This problem was felt to be growing more serious with the increasing lack of differentiation between officials - including the military - and commerce (**guan shang bu fen**). Commenting on this intersection (**jiaocha**) between power and money one informant remarked succinctly that "high officials have the most money because they have the most power." Similarly, a factory worker who engaged in small scale business activities remarked to me that "only one kind of business is easy - that

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[63]"Reform Bringing About Profound Social Changes" CD 27 May 1993: 4.

is to use power to do business." Those with "special power" (**tequan**) had access to information and social connections (**menlu** - "doors and roads"). Power could also replace money. For example, high officials could invite people to eat at the state's expense and have free trips abroad and other benefits under the guise of "work requirements" (**gongzuo xuyao**). It should be noted that notions of what constituted corruption varied. For instance, on one occasion I asked a retired professor in his nineties about corruption. His response was "do you know "**xiahai**"? In his (very Confucian) view intellectuals engaging in commerce was tantamount to corruption. For most informants **xiahai** may have problematic aspects but it did not constitute corruption.

In everyday life scams, rip-offs, petty fraud, and double-dealing were considered increasingly common. For instance, I was often asked by informants if I had been "*tsɛ*/**zhan**" at private markets or **getihu** restaurants. The dialect term *tsɛ* was employed in a similar fashion to the English "fleeced" or "rip-off", although *tsɛ* is "to cut". It was said of those skilled in *tsɛ* that "their knife is well sharpened" (*to mo le lo kua*/**dao mo de hen kuai**). Informants would tell me that, for example, "restaurants *tsɛ* the **laobaixing**" or "schools *tsɛ* parents" (through extra fees). When discussing trends in contemporary Shanghai with a man in his seventies who had spent many years in prison as a "Rightist" he scornfully remarked "'socialism with Chinese characteristics'. Bullshit! A woman at my factory had to pay a doctor 1,500¥ to get an operation done. This is very common. Although medical fees are supposed to be free, people have to bribe (**shaoxiang**) doctors."

The Lower Reaches - Sleaze

Pre-1949 Shanghai attained international notoriety as a sinful city, the location for large-scale prostitution, racketeering and gambling all organized by a criminal underworld which kept legal controls at bay by substantial pay-offs. In the words of Rhoads Murphey "[i]t was...justly famous as one of the wickedest cities in the world" (1953: 7). Alongside a loosening of the puritanical sexual morality of the Maoist era many residents feared that such phenomena were returning to Shanghai. Older people especially believed that Shanghai was degenerating (**duoluo** - "sinking") with a proliferation of "obscene, dirty and low-down" (**xialiu** - also "lower reaches of a river") phenomena.

During 1992-4 , numerous entertainment venues such as nightclubs and karaoke bars opened. Most Shanghainese could not afford to visit such places but in popular perceptions these were the site for prostitution and "rip-offs". They were exemplars of those murky depths where, as one informant remarked, "in Shanghai many things are unclear (**gao bu**

qingchu)." Such locations were believed to be permitted to continue their business because they bribed local officials and the police. Regular news items detailed police operations designed to "eradicate pornography" (**saohuang** - literally "sweep away the yellow"). The intention was to keep Shanghai's streets not only physically, but also morally, clean. Female hostesses who accompany customers (**peijiu nulang**) were shown being rounded up and herded into police vans. In one scandal a restaurant was fined for adding a cocaine related substance to its hot pot! Often informants assumed that there was a murky and sinister intersection of power and corruption with state apparatus (**guojia jiguan**) involved in such activities. With such strong backing (**houtai hen ying**) legal frameworks amounted to little more than a "paper tiger". Many feared too that underworld gangs, such as prospered before pre-1949, will make a return, either as indigenous growths or transplanted from Hong Kong.

1.5 "Where Water Flows, a Channel is Formed" (**shuidao qucheng**)

Much was believed to have been washed away but new channels were also forming. This section investigates a few of the patterns which were emerging in Shanghai and concludes with a brief overview of some local people's expectations for the future of their city.

1.5.1 New Roads in the Mind - Changes in Attitude, Behaviour and Thought

*In the early 1980s the slogan was the 'Four Modernizations' and 'carry out modernization' (**gao xiandaihua**). Chinese traditional thought is/was like an iron door (**tiemen**). It was no good just to tap (**peng**) against it. This conservative iron door (**baoshou tiemen**) had to be forced open. It cannot be closed up again.*

Young businessman

Gaige kaifang was frequently described as having changed the thoughts (**sixiang**) and thinking (**silu** - "thought roads") of local people and especially that of the young. The term **sixiang** has no direct English translation, it encompasses thought, thinking, attitudes and outlook. Economic reforms have increased the scope for individual choice, competitiveness and uncertainty whilst the "Open Door" policy has enabled people to see alternative ways of doing things. Chan *et al* write of Chen Village cadres in Guangdong in the late 1980s that "[e]xposure to the world and to Hong Kong through the mass media and through personal contacts has widened their horizons to accept other forms of culture and other political and economic systems" (1992: 331). A young state employee told me: "with **gaige kaifang** people's thinking is enlivened. Now we have seen the outside world (**waimian**)." Key trends mentioned were increased money orientatedness and individualism.

A typical comment, made by a university lecturer, was that "now people think for themselves more (**naozi ziji kaolu duo**). It is not like before when whatever Mao Zedong said went." A corollary of such trends as increasing personal freedom and competition were complaints that people were more selfish and interpersonal relationships colder (**lengmo**).

A distinctive youth culture along with a generation gap was emerging in Shanghai.[64] A China Daily article suggested there had been "great change" among young people between the age of 17 and 37.[65] It described them as:

> Like passengers boarding a ship sailing into uncharted waters, they expect a happy journey even when feeling seasick and restless... drastic [economic] reform has changed the social structure and the general mentality of the public. With the changes has come the sense of uncertainty and the promises of opportunity. Through the open policy, those surveyed have developed a wider knowledge of the outside world and have far more choices than their forbears. But like travellers at a crossroads, they seem puzzled by the wide-range of choices... [young people] are more passionate and practical, more romantic and liberal.

My informants shared the view expressed in this article that the sudden inflow of images from the West after 1978 had played a crucial part in changing young people's attitudes and values by providing them with alternative perspectives and lifestyles. A teacher told me that he had first heard about the "generation gap" in a television programme about America. From his relationship with his own young son he realized that China too has a generation gap - the Chinese term **daigou** ("generation gap") is a direct translation from English. Parents sometimes considered the dating behaviour of the young immoral, found it hard to accept if their offspring changed jobs and incomprehensible if they spent several hundred *yuan* on tickets for the concerts of Hong Kong pop singers. A teacher at a key middle school considered that the **sixiang** of children was now livelier. He explained that:

> In the past students' minds were closed because the country was closed with the closed door policy (**biguan zhengce**). Now the thoughts (**silu**) of students are more **kaifang** because they have seen more. In the past they just listened to whatever the teacher said. Now children see television and many of their homes have foreign magazines and so on. We older generation cannot keep up.

A young university lecturer felt that since 1991-2 people's attitudes had become more positive, hopeful and confident. At 28 he felt a difference between his outlook and that of current university students. He felt that "now students stress themselves more (**zhuzhong ziji**), have a greater sense of self (**ziwo yidian**) and are more individualistic (**geren**

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[64]On youth culture and the emergence of a generation gap in China generally see Hooper 1985: 33-40, Ownby 1985, Rosen 1989, 1990.

[65]5 April 1993: 4.

chengshu)." He added that "they have more opportunities and fewer restrictions on them." A young businessmen considered China's continuing rule by man (**renzhi**) and not by law (**fazhi**) as problematic. However, he believed that as a result of **gaige kaifang** "each person has learnt to think for themselves (**xuehui ziji sikao**), they have seen the situation outside (**waimian de qingjing**) and it is not possible for the door to be closed."

1.5.2 When the Water Subsides the Rocks Emerge (**shuiluo shichu**)

The erosion of the iron rice bowl and the growth of competition presented new opportunities, challenges, pressures, uncertainties and risks for each person. A significant reaction to this was a renewed stress upon education and the acquisition of skills in order to improve career prospects.[66] A final year university student remarked that "every day **gaige kaifang** makes greater demands upon one. Before horizons were very limited, now there is much more scope. In the past it was '60 marks forever' (**liushi fen wansui**), now even ninety marks is not enough. Many fellow students take extra courses to enable them to adapt to the great tidal current of **gaige kaifang**." Following the adoption of the "Open Door" policy many English courses were set up, including preparation courses for TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), a prerequisite for many to fulfilling a dream to go abroad. Facility in English resembled a passport - it could open "roads" (opportunities) which were blocked and inaccessible to those who lacked knowledge of it. Within Shanghai, proficiency in English had become an important requirement in many professions. During 1992-4 popular extra curricula courses, English aside, included computing, accountancy, Cantonese and Japanese.

Parents were aware that their offspring would have to fit into a very different, far more competitive environment. With the one child policy parental resources were concentrated upon a single child. Study was seen as a main route to a successful life. A shop assistant with a young son told me that education had become much more important. She felt that "now it is different. **Danwei** have contracts, one must have education. If one does not study well, since there are so many people, they will not want you." Parents were especially concerned to get their children into key middle schools. From a key middle school most pupils could expect to obtain a university place, from other schools only a small minority. Parents engaged in various strategies to try and ensure that their children got into a key middle school. Some prepared the way for this by enrolling their children

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[66]Walder (1990: 155) found that in the mid-1980s education had increased dramatically as a predictor of income and was, for example, a much more important factor then Party membership.

in unofficial "key" nursery schools, arranging private tutors and extra curricula courses. Using language popularized in the reform era, a university student told me that one consequence of **gaige kaifang** was that parents were prepared to pay for their children's education, "they invest a little money and hope to get a return later."

Newly emerged inequalities were being reproduced in educational opportunities. Even in the state education sector provision differed widely. At the key middle school mentioned above which rented out its land as shop fronts these highly successful commercial ventures provided the school with an income several times higher than the city education department allocated to it. This school had facilities far superior to schools in less central areas of Shanghai. An even more striking instance of the way in which "where water flows, a channel is formed" (**shuidao qucheng**) was the way Shanghai's new "moneyed classes" were now able to enrol their children in one of the city's recently established private schools. At one private primary school set up in early 1993 the largest proportion of parents were enterprise heads, often in companies involved in international trade. Other children had parents working in the media, as joint venture company managers, high-ranking military personnel, teachers or overseas. There was only one **getihu** parent. In its second term of operation the school required a one-off (**zhanzhu**) payment of 5,000-10,000¥ per child, termly fees are 600¥ and even monthly fees for snacks and fruit total 400¥. Any official concern over such a "school for aristocrats" was muted.[67] A China Daily article described private schools simply as "filling a gap in...demand" and as "more flexible in adjusting to the demands of the employment market than their State-funded counterparts."[68]

1.5.3 "Everything Before Us, Nothing Before Us"

Society looks stable and flourishing, but we do not know what it will be like tomorrow.
Informant's comment

In this section I look briefly at some expectations for the future of Shanghai. These spread across a range from great optimism to fearful pessimism. Despite the economic reforms and depoliticization described above informants considered the lot of the **laobaixing** profoundly dependent upon China's national leaders. A typical response when asked what the future holds for Shanghai was that "it all depends upon the policy of the higher

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[67]"Schooling Aimed at Moneyed Classes" CD 18 May 1993: 3.

[68]Ibid.

authorities."[69] At the same time, in direct contrast to the notion of "open" doors, informants stated that "the **laobaixing** do not know the inner affairs (**neiqing**) of the state." As I mentioned above, expectations that the Communist Party will further political reform were limited - this would be to "ask a tiger for its skin" (**yu hu mou pi** - request somebody to act against their own interests). The general impression I gained was that informants believed that the populace could prosper under its own steam but that "struggle" amongst elite party factions could prevent or destroy this. The Party, as it were, retained the ultimate power to misdirect and waste the energy flowing through the sluice.

Even the most optimistic harboured some concern for the period following the death of Deng Xiaoping, regarding it as a period of uncertainty and potential danger. The most optimistic scenario was for a prosperous and glorious (**guangming** - "brightly lit and visible") future, with the policy of **gaige kaifang** regarded as irreversible, the only question being its pace. According to such views the problems outlined above will gradually be resolved. At the opposite extreme pessimistic observers regarded chaos (**luan**) as extremely likely, even inevitable. Increasing income inequality was often considered particularly problematic, with informants noting that this was a main cause behind the 1949 revolution. Similarly, corruption was considered insoluble since it was endemic from top to bottom. In the view of one informant China appeared stable but that "change is like a woman giving birth - her stomach must undergo a period of pain before the child is born. The present system will definitely collapse but many will die in the process. Chaos is inevitable." For him **gaige kaifang** was a transitional stage to non-CCP rule.[70]

The type of chaos envisaged encompassed economic collapse - with the increased differentiation (**san**) of the economic structure making it increasingly impervious to government attempts to control economic crises, civil strife including strikes and protests, increasing crime - including the development of underworld gangs and threats to public order caused by migrant workers, warlordism - as an extension of the local protectionism which has developed during **gaige kaifang** - and even civil war. Even in such worst case scenarios the "Open Door" policy was generally considered secure since one result of **gaige kaifang** was that the military had become too deeply involved in commerce and trade to reverse this policy. In addition, China was felt to have a great advantage over the former USSR in its relative ethnic homogeneity.

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[69]Elisabeth Croll (1994: 224) notes an identical response in the Chinese countryside.

[70]See Gordon White (1991b) on the notion of a gradual transition from totalitarianism to authoritarianism and then democracy.

Since the 1980s there has been a "dramatic revolution of rising expectations" (Goodman 1991: 15). Younger people often have especially high expectations. I often observed a generation gap where parents expressed themselves relatively content with the pace and achievements of reform whilst their offspring considered it too slow. The differential expectations and desires of the younger generation were themselves indicative of the changed socio-political environment in which they had been brought up. In Shanghai, many looked forward to the "comfortable" (**xiaokang**) living standards Deng Xiaoping has promised to them by the first decade of the twenty first century. Colour televisions and fridges were considered essentials by most Shanghainese with video recorders and air-conditioning units rapidly becoming so regarded. Car ownership was still only a dream for the vast majority but home ownership was spreading rapidly with government initiatives to sell housing to sitting tenants.

The demise or modification of the Communist Party, widely predicted after June 4, 1989, has failed to materialize although there has been "a gradual decline in the regime's power and authority" (White 1991a: 15). Gordon White's assertion that after June 4 the Party's legitimacy was "shattered" also seems premature (1). The party-state has nailed its colours to raising living standards, with a realization that "legitimacy, or simply acquiescence in its continued rule, can only be regained through economic success" (Saich 1992: 59). It may, perhaps, be said that the Party has "boarded the pirate ship" **shang le zeichuan**),[71] and may be unable to get off even if it wanted to. On the basis of my findings in Shanghai the Party has, so far, been successful in this project. However, in the event of economic downturn those simmering discontents I have outlined would surely provoke profound unrest and coalescence of the aggrieved.

Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphors structure the actions we perform, for example, the "argument is war" metaphor structures the actions we perform in arguing (1980: 4). An intriguing aspect of the "watery metaphors" I have outlined is that although some are instances of nature controlled and channelled by human agents, as in the sluice gate, many portray the consequences of human actions as though they are uncontrolled natural phenomenon, such as waves and tides. Lakoff and Johnson describe the systematicity of metaphorical concepts as hiding other aspects of concepts (10). Thus to see immigration as a "tide" or consumerism as a "flood" seems to involve a denial of human agency. Does this relate to the growing sense of uncertainty I have highlighted? However, against this are the socio-spatial metaphors of roads, routes and doors, all

[71]Also "join a reactionary faction".

phenomena which are constructed and subject to alteration by human design. William Taylor cautions that "[m]etaphors can be seductively reductionist" (1984: 11). However, the metaphors I have examined seem rich and fruitful enough to permit considerable growth, slippage and overspill. They are readily susceptible to more than one interpretation and, therefore, symptomatic of the moves on the political and economic fronts from rigid "orthodoxy" to the condoning of alternative approaches and a degree of pluralism.

In this chapter I have sketched some of the boulders, tides and shifting currents in contemporary Shanghai. A strong consensus of my informants was that the sluice gate which has been opened cannot be closed again. A Chinese proverb provides an appropriate analogy for the **gaige kaifang** project: water can support a boat, it can also turn it over (**shui neng zai zhou, yi neng fu zhou**). It is evident from many comments in this chapter that there are distinct dangers in the profound and far-reaching socio-economic changes which have been embarked upon in Shanghai. However, as another proverb points out: when the water is too clear there are no fish (**shui zhi qing ze wu yu**). In other words, any project designed to improve the living standards of over twelve million citizens and to alter the economic structure of a major metropolis will inevitably involve risks and pursuing paths whose results are not always predictable. I feel that the final comment should be that of a lecturer in his mid-fifties. He expressed hope for Shanghai's future development and then added that "the most fearful thing is to be without hope. Now we have hope. This is progress."

Chapter 2 Global and Intra-national Cultural Flows: Renegotiating Boundaries and Identities in Contemporary Shanghai

An interesting conversation was carried on during dinner between Sing-Hoo and the priests... They expressed their opinions freely upon the natives of different provinces, and spoke of them as if they belonged to different nations, just as we would do of the natives of France, Holland, or Denmark. The Canton men they did not like; the Tartars were good - the Emperor was a Tartar. All the outside nations were bad, particularly the Kwei-tszes, a name signifying Devils's children, which they charitably apply to the nations of the western world.

Robert Fortune, 1853[1]

Introduction

In this chapter and the next my main intention is to examine ways in which various shifting socio-spatial boundaries were represented by and affected the lifestyles of Shanghai residents. This chapter focuses on Chinese migrants, global flow and new technologies and their impact upon identities in Shanghai. The following chapter examines differential conceptions of spaces within the city itself, the experiences of inhabiting different kinds of space within Shanghai and the ways in which different people negotiated these spaces.

I have four main aims in this chapter: Firstly, much Western and Chinese literature conveys the impression that there is a unitary and invariant Chinese identity, constant in both time and place. By contrast, anthropologists such as Anthony Cohen, writing in a British context, have sought to "discredit the assumptions of homogeneity and the crude stereotypes which popularly characterise views of Britain" (1982b: 2). In a similar way I seek to disassemble the homogeneity of "Chinese" identity through an examination of the layers of interweaving identities which may be asserted in the specific spatial location of Shanghai. Secondly, theorists such as Edward Said (1978) and Ronald Inden (1990) have rightly criticised the essentializing tendency in Western representations of "other" cultures. However, they run the risk of perpetuating the very Orientalism they seek to remove by underestimating the ability of non-European peoples to make their own definitions. In providing a sociological topography of the world as viewed from the perspective of Shanghainese residents I demonstrate the extent to which non-Western people's may themselves engage in "orientalizing".[2] Thirdly, with the "Open Door" policy outlined in the previous chapter, Shanghai was rejoining the global economy and

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[1]Fortune Two Visits to the Tea Countries of China Volume II 1853: 193-4.

[2]By the term "orientalizing" I indicate the essentializing and stereotypical defining of other ethnic groups.

its boundaries to other parts of China had become far more permeable. This porosity permitted a much greater flow of people, capital, technology and images. It therefore seems an appropriate time and location to assess the impact of such processes upon identities. Fourthly, at a time when the Soviet Union has been disassembled, the former Yugoslavia ridden with ethnic conflicts and discussion on the possibility that China will "deconstruct" (cf. Goodman & Segal 1994), I assess the potency of, and potentiality for, a specifically Shanghainese identity.

In section one of this chapter I provide an "ideal type" model of Shanghai's pre-1949 cosmopolitanism and subsequent closure to international flow. I then provide a similar outline with regard to the porosity and closure of Shanghai's boundaries within China. Section two examines anthropological notions of self/other. I highlight the way representations of "others" may be used as a "mirror" to investigate the defining selves - a project applicable both to Western Orientalists and representations of others by Shanghainese. I then provide a speculative overview of the parameters of Chinese and Shanghainese identities before the reform era. Section three outlines the renewed permeability of Shanghai's intra-national boundaries and some of the consequences for identities in Shanghai. Attention is drawn to the way Shanghainese defined themselves in contradistinction to Beijingers and especially the rural migrant workers who now flocked to the city.

In section four I use this information to help construct a composite sketch of what constitutes "being Shanghainese". I examine the vitality of such an identification in contemporary Shanghai. With increasing decentralization of economic powers, the long-term expropriations of profits made in the city by the central government, and the "deluge" of migrant workers there was ample evidence of the fostering of assertive Shanghainese identities. However, I then indicate aspects of Shanghai's increased porosity which facilitated re-fabricated horizontal linkages - these tended to pull in an opposing direction to local assertiveness. The "Open Door" permitted an increasing global cultural flows. In section five I examine some of the consequences of this for "Chinese" and "Shanghainese" identities, pointing to ways in which these flows may (or have the potential to) sustain, undermine and redefine these identities. I also highlight the potential they provide for other types of identifications.

2.1 Shanghai: Porosity and Enclosure

2.1.1 Shanghai: From World City To Chinese City

[A]fter the seventeenth century, the "New World" would come knocking on the tightly-closed gate of the ancient East...full of vitality and bearing with it a brand-new civilization.

Heshang documentary (Su & Wang 1991: 149)

Shanghai was an important coastal port in the Song and Yuan dynasties (Johnson 1995: 31-42). However, the transfer of the Ming capital from Nanjing to Beijing in 1421 and imperial prohibitions on sea trade brought some three centuries of decline for Shanghai. The city's fortunes began to change when the Kangxi emperor lifted these restrictions in 1684. Eighteenth century Shanghai flourished as a cross-roads for trade and commerce. The Reverend Charles Gutzlaff who visited Shanghai in 1832 described it as "the gate of central Asia, and especially of the central provinces of China" (1833-4: 30). After the Opium War and its establishment as a treaty port Shanghai rapidly increased its integration into the global economy. By the 1920s and 1930s Shanghai had become one of the world's major cities.

As a thriving entrepôt Shanghai attracted "sojourners from all over the globe" (Perry 1993: 12). The diverse range of Chinese migrants were joined by many foreign companies, workers, missionaries, tourists and refugees creating a highly cosmopolitan city. Its shops purveyed goods from every quarter of the globe and services were available to cater to every taste. Despite attempts by sections of the Chinese populace to wrest control from them through protests and strikes - especially in the 1920s - foreign nationals maintained jurisdiction over large parts of the city. They inscribed their domination upon its streets and avenues naming them after the places and heroes of their own countries, for example, Broadway, Edinburgh and Edward VII Streets (Clifford 1991: 60). The city was also a relatively free haven for diverse publications, cultural expression and the exchange of ideas.

Chinese nationalism and an antipathy towards imperialist powers were important elements of the Communist Party's support. This was, perhaps, especially significant in semi-colonial Shanghai where incursions by foreigners had created a comprador class and many intellectuals espoused "Western" thoughts. From the outset the new regime which took control of Shanghai in 1949 was hostile to or, at least, deeply suspicious of Western nations - sentiments returned in equal measure. In 1960, after the split with the Soviet Union - China's main ally and the model for many of its economic policies - the die was cast. This combination of external hostility and a belief in the need for autarky to preserve the existence of the state and its new government impelled China's rulers to adopt a policy of closing the country to international intercourse (**biguan zishou**), and of

self reliance (**zili gengsheng**). Shanghai was to be reinscribed as an unambiguously, wholly Chinese city, its gaze turning inward rather than outward from the Huang Pu river.

In 1949 most of the foreign nationals and companies which had returned after the Second World War fled from Shanghai. By the mid-1950s those who remained had their property confiscated and were compelled to leave or permitted to stay "only on sufferance, confined to their enclosures and denied access to most of China except by special permission" (Jenner 1992: 91).[3] People's experiences of interactions with foreigners could not be erased, nor could the vast array of colonial architecture, much of it built to last for centuries. However, ephemeral forms of Western cultural artifacts were gradually removed from the city - for example, cinemas were forced to cease their diet of American films.[4] Shanghai was still China's main industrial city but the crossroads of Asia was now a *cul de sac*.

From the early 1950s until the early 1980s contact with foreigners and knowledge of the world beyond the borders of the People's Republic was extremely limited and strictly regulated. Media representations of other countries, for instance, were mostly limited to propaganda films imported from Eastern Europe.[5] Distinctions between the inside (**nei**) and outside (**wai**) were sharply drawn and the boundaries subject to surveillance and strict control. All people with foreign contacts, including overseas Chinese, faced suspicion and often persecution as potential spies.[6] Fear meant that contacts with relatives abroad trickled to a halt, mention of them became taboo even within many families. In the words of one Shanghai academic "there was no relationship with the outside world."

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[3]Clifford notes that in 1949 there were some 4,000 Britons in Shanghai (1991: 277).

[4]Gaulton writes that in early 1949, 75% of the audience patronized American films. By June 1950, this figure was down to 28.3%, falling to zero with the start of the Korean War (1981: 50).

[5]Although note Perry Link's study on hand-copied volumes (**shou chaoben**) of entertainment fiction which circulated in urban China during the Cultural Revolution. Link states that "[d]uring the years when China has commonly been described, by Chinese as well as by foreigners, as sealed off or turned inward, it is most interesting to note how frequently underground entertainment fiction was set in foreign countries or otherwise involved with foreign countries" (1989: 28-9). However, it is telling, as Link remarks, that information about the outside world had to be sought "though an illicit medium like hand-copied fiction" (29).

[6]See, for instance, Nien Cheng's account of her experiences during the Cultural Revolution. Because of her contact with and employment by foreigners - she had been employed by the *Shell International Petroleum Company* - she was suspected of being a spy and still working for the "imperialists" (1986: 19-22, 161-8).

Benedict Anderson's (1983) notion of an imagined community seems particularly applicable for this period.[7] Media of all types were closely controlled and a limited range of messages repeated across different types of media including books, newspapers, revolutionary operas, films, and the ubiquitous loud speakers. Alternatives to this monologic voice were available only to a selected few. Restricted access (**neibu**) publications were carefully graded and disseminated to party cadres according to their level in the CCP hierarchy. At the lowest level of the vertically integrated structure controlled by ministries from Beijing, the urban workforce was "enclosed" within work units (**danwei**), all-encompassing, cellular entities (Walder 1988). Even following the United States formal recognition of the PRC and its accession to the United Nations in the early 1970s the PRC remained a largely closed country. The first major increase in porosity occurred - primarily involving Hong Kong - with the establishment of Shenzhen as a Special Economic Zone in 1979.

2.1.2 Shanghai's Changing Place in China: From Traditional Flow to Revolutionary Enclosure

In essence, under Mao, an invisible wall kept out the peasantry and protected the urban population. In effect, the history of walled cities did not end with the demise of imperial China.

Kam Wing Chan (1994: 147)

Writers on "traditional" Chinese cities (e.g. Mote 1977: 117-9, Skinner 1977a: 268-9) emphasize the existence of a rural-urban continuum and of native place identifications in cities. Pre-twentieth century China is described as having had a "vague and highly permeable boundary between city and countryside" (Parish & Whyte 1984: 26). This pattern was still evident to Olga Lang when she conducted research in Shanghai in the mid-1930s (1946: 86-7). Shanghai has attracted sojourners since at least the thirteenth century (Sang 1982, Johnson 1993). From the second quarter of the eighteenth century in particular Shanghai developed as a "broker city" (Johnson 1993: 176). As a "hot, noisy place" (**renao de difang**) it attracted a large transient population and many migrants. Early Western visitors to the city often remarked on the proportion of immigrants in the city population. In 1843 the population was described as "a mixed, migratory one, perhaps not one half of those now resident having been born and bred in this city" (CR

[7] I realize the problem of "over-Maoizing" the years 1949-1976 and ignoring significant shifts in policies over these years. However, I am providing a Weberian 'ideal type' model which, whilst it may gloss over certain nuances, is faithful to the portrayals I was provided with by local residents.

1847 16(11): 564, see also CR 1850 19(2): 107). This diversity is recognized in Shanghai's street names - those running north-south have names of Chinese provinces, those running east-west names of Chinese cities. After 1842, Shanghai became an even more powerful magnet for both foreigners and Chinese, such that its population increased some tenfold within a hundred years. The number of foreign residents in the Settlement increased from a mere 50 in 1844 to 36,471 in 1930 (Feetham 1931: 49-53).

Native place identity was an important organizing factor in imperial China, especially for the extensive sojourner component of city populations which were typically organized along native-place lines and occupationally specialized by place of origin (Skinner 1977b: 538-46).[8] On the basis of her research into the Ningbo community in Shanghai, Susan Jones considers that "prior to the 1930's, native-place ties provided the primary channels through which family, class, and business interests were articulated in Chinese cities" (1974: 96). In Shanghai, workers in specific industries were often immigrants from particular areas (Johnson 1993: 158-68, White 1978: 100-1), and "[h]ierarchy...was structured largely according to native-place identification" (Honig 1990: 274). In the thriving underworld of pre-1949 Shanghai, native-place networks were "the basic building bloc of gangster organizations" (Martin 1992: 268). Even the hierarchy of prostitution in Republican era Shanghai was structured by regionalism (Hershatter 1989). Bryna Goodman (1992) writes that native-place organizations played an important role in the 1919 May Fourth Movement in Shanghai. Native-place also played an significant part in labour disputes where the "politics of place...both opened possibilities and set the bounds to the development of collective action" (Perry 1993: 30).

Migrants from Ningbo, Canton, and Jiangsu played a particularly important part in Shanghai's commercial development. In the second half of the eighteenth century Shanghai's flourishing trade and commerce attracted many Ningbo merchants and they used ties of native place in their gradual domination of the city's financial sector.[9] The Cantonese in the city - some 60,000 in the 1880s - were most evident as compradors and Bergère states that until the 1880s the term "Cantonese" and "comprador" were synonymous in Shanghai (1989: 145, 38-41).[10] Ch'en notes the crucial importance of

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[8]As Wasserstrom (1991: 32-3) points out, foreign residents later set up their own native-place associations.

[9]See Jones 1974, Shiba 1977.

[10]See Sang (1982) on the rivalry between Cantonese and Ningbo people in Shanghai from the mid-nineteenth century until the late nineteenth.

family relations and local affinity to the compradors from Suzhou, Ningbo, and Zhejiang in Shanghai (1979: 221-4).[11] By the 1920s the comprador system was less important, though, the Cantonese by then dominated the field of large modern shops and the cigarette industry.

Migrants from Jiangsu were especially involved in the cotton industry and in mechanized engineering. Those from southern Jiangsu formed the elite whilst those from Subei or Jiangbei (Jiangsu north of the Yangzi River and south of the Huai) were predominantly an underclass and engaged in occupations seen as undesirable and inferior (Honig 1989b: 245-9). Honig's research on the history and contemporary situation of Subei people in Shanghai provides evidence of the persisting importance of regional identifications and stereotypes in Shanghai.[12]

The proportion of migrants remained high during the first half of the twentieth century. Shanghai's population grew dramatically from 1.3m in 1910 to 2.6m in 1927 of whom some 72-83% were born outside Shanghai (Bergère 1989: 100). In 1987, Davis interviewed one hundred Shanghai women born between 1925 and 1935 - 68% of these women and 78% of their husbands had been born outside Shanghai (1990: 102). Despite the "shallowness" of many families' residency in Shanghai local people have a strong sense of there being a distinctively Shanghainese identity.

Migration to Shanghai continued after 1949 but was gradually halted by various measures imposed during the 1950s which were designed as "policing" measures and to promote local autarky, control the growth of large cities and to redistribute resources to the interior (Parish & Whyte 1984: 16-26). During the "revolutionary period of comprehensive residence control" (White 1994: 63), these measures included migration restrictions and the rationing of many basic goods and above all, in 1958, the introduction of the household registration system (**hukou**). Shanghai's population rose from 3,480,018 in 1937 to 4,447,015 in 1949 and 6,204,417 in 1953 (Pannell 1981: 99, 103). Between May 1956 and January 1957 alone there was an increase of 700,000 people, largely as the result of migration (White 1978: 188).[13] Under the **hukou** ("household registration")

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[11]See also Bergère's (1989: 141-52) examination of the geographic structure of the Shanghai business community in the 1920s.

[12]Details provided by Honig are closely paralleled by Wu *et al* (1985). See also Wu & Lan (1985) and Chu (1985 esp 14-17).

[13]Shanghai's population is extremely difficult to gauge, not least because the relevant boundaries have changed several times and official figures vary in their reliability. White gives figures for Shanghai's population for every year from 1950 to 1992 (1994: 67-8). These include: 1950 - 4.9m, 1955 - 6.4m, 1960

system introduced in 1959 every person had to be registered at birth and had to apply for permission to move elsewhere (Parish & Whyte 1984: 18-19, White 1978: 148-54). An extensive rationing system also operated to control the movement of people. Many basic commodities such as rice, meat and cooking oil were rationed, and as the ration cards were for use solely in one specified city movement to cities from the countryside, or from one city to another, was forestalled (Parish & Whyte 1984: 86-90, White 1978: 154-75). The effectiveness of these measures and the sending of Shanghainese to other parts of China (see below) meant that whilst Shanghai's central city area population increased by 1.68 million between 1949-59, between 1959-82 it rose by just 207,600, in 1949 its population was 4.19m and in 1982, 6.08m (Yan 1985: 107).

The various "policing" controls effectively sealed Shanghai's "frontiers" and "an invisible wall separated the urban and rural populations" (Chan 1994: 97). As a consequence, in rural China, "local populations were more confined to their villages than ever before in Chinese history" (Croll 1994: 120). For the few rural residents able to come to Shanghai it was, one academic told me, "as though they had got a green card." Whilst the rhetoric of the Maoist period professed the goal of reducing the differences between urban and rural China most analysts agree that post 1949 changes "actually widened the gap substantially" (Whyte 1988: 307).[14]

The traditional migration pattern was reversed, urban-rural interaction was primarily *from* urban *to* rural areas which created "a rigid urban hierarchy of limited access" (Parish & Whyte 1984: 17-18). From the 1950s onwards, there were various campaigns to relocate people out of Shanghai. Between 1955-1972, there was a net outflow of 2.2 million people from Shanghai (White 1994: 66). Between 1968-71 alone, 890,000 Shanghai youth were sent to the countryside, for periods of up to ten years, some indefinitely (Yan 1985: 109, White 1978: 53-97).[15]

With the notable exception of the brief period of "revolutionary tourism" by Red Guards in the late 1960s (White 1994: 83, note 48), for most of the Maoist period travel within China was heavily restricted with a "*de facto* internal passport system" (Chan 1994: 91). For instance, official documents were required to buy travel tickets and special

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- 10.4m, 1965 - 10.9m, 1970 - 10.8m, 1975 - 10.7m, 1980 - 11.4m, 1985 - 12.1m, 1990 - 12.8m, 1992 - 12.8m. Howe (1968: 78) has rather lower figures for the earlier years. Kirkby gives the population of Shanghai municipality in 1982 as around 12m, with a core population of 6.32m (1985: 62).

[14]As Chan argues, policies of the Maoist era were often "exploitative of the rural sector" (1994: 97).

[15]Howe (1968: 95) considers that the campaign to send down youth to the countryside in 1957 was designed, at least in part, to reduce the demand on scarce urban housing.

bureaucratic permission necessary to obtain ration coupons for areas other than one's official registration.

As Barry Naughton points out, the urban-rural divide gave "hard edges" to cities such as Shanghai (1995: 73) - with the countryside adjacent to and surrounding the city markedly and visibly different. Alongside the creation of strict urban-rural boundaries, the two sectors were organized according to markedly different structural patterns. An important consequence of these developments was "to segregate the population into clear-cut urban and rural classes and cultures" (Yang 1989a: 31, also Whyte 1988, Watson 1992). For example, in an examination of funeral rituals Martin Whyte argues that "peasants and urbanites, who formerly knew a common ritual vocabulary, are now increasingly aliens to each others customs" (1988: 308). In these rituals he sees a "sharp urban-rural gap that didn't exist before 1949" (304). I observed evidence of this urban-rural cultural bifurcation through attendance at weddings in the city zone of Shanghai and those in suburban counties of Shanghai. In the former, for instance, the families of the bride and groom ate together but in the latter they ate separately. These differences were pointed out to me by informants who were, themselves, very clear about the existence of a sharp rural-urban disjunction.

James Watson (1992) argues that in pre-socialist China it was orthopraxy (correct practice) which made Chinese culture "Chinese" whereas during the Maoist period orthodoxy was stressed "through the imposition of a centrally controlled ideology" (79). He would take these wedding rituals as evidence of the "disappearance of a unified cultural tradition" and locate the cause of this in Maoist policies. However, although policies adopted at this time may have hastened cultural divergence there is evidence that the cultural bifurcation of urban and rural forms predated the Maoist era. The iconoclastic "civilized weddings" (**wenming hunli**) of 1930s Shanghai which copied Western models are an instance of this. The Republican Revolution in 1911 had also ushered in efforts to foster simpler and Westernized forms of funerals (Whyte 1988: 291-2). It may be that Myron Cohen (1993) is more accurate when he locates the cause of such "radical departure from tradition" in urban China as due to Western influence, especially in the treaty ports.

2.2 Orientalizing Shanghai: Representing Others, Defining Selves

*Beijingers love the country, Cantonese sell (also "betray") the country, Shanghainese leave the country (**Beijingren aiguo, Guangzhouren maiguo, Shanghairen chuguo**).*

Popular rhyme.[16]

2.2.1 Notions of Self/Other

I find much of the literature on ethnicity and "culture" overly deterministic, construing them as discrete essences and holding forth the possibility of grasping and defining them. Ethnicity is, at best, an "elusive concept" (Burgess 1978: 266). Even when analysts have suggested more fluid notions of ethnicity such as the creole metaphor (Drummond 1980) problems still remain. For instance, this notion seems to posit a false dichotomy between heterogenous and homogeneous "cultures". Richard Fardon is rightly critical of the "presupposition of a universal class of ethnic difference" (1987: 177). I prefer to avoid the term and talk instead of (potential) identities and to examine the ways in which "identities crystallize transiently and in terms of different registers of difference" (Ibid: 183).

Despite my caution and caveats as an analyst it is important to note that my informants usually *did* essentialize and stereotype identities of both collective selves and others. People were willing and able to produce regional (also "class" and gender) stereotypes and stereotypes of foreigners.[17] For instance, if informants were asked to describe a "typical Shanghainese", most responded without equivocation. For my part, I was often asked to describe a "typical English person". My failure and inability to produce an appropriate answer was generally regarded as evasive. Any consciousness that such stereotypes - which showed a remarkable degree of convergence - were problematic was generally absent amongst respondents of all educational levels.

Anthropologists such as Barth (1969), Cohen (1985) and Wallman (1979) have pointed out that identities often only become discursive at the boundaries where they encounter others. A common theme is that "identity is always constructed by reference to others" (Cohen 1975: 95) and that "the construction of the collective self...depends on its *differentiation* from the collective other" (Comaroff 1987: 308-9). Morley and Robins (1989) adopt a similar view, noting that "difference is constitutive of identity" (14). They suggest two lines of investigation: "how we define ourselves, by distinguishing ourselves from the Other" and "who the significant Others are against whom (and in relation to whom) a given person or group is defined" (10).

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[16]A popular story contrasts the different behaviour of a Beijinger, a Cantonese and a Shanghainese on a leaking boat [i.e. China]. The Beijinger would try to mend the boat, the Cantonese try to sell it and the Shanghainese jump overboard.

[17]See Guldin's (1984) "ethnic map" for Hong Kong.

From the mid-nineteenth century and into the early decades of this century there was a distinct vogue amongst British writers for collecting instances of "the curious topsy-turviness of things in China" (Darwent 1904: 66). Cumming found it "really amusing to note in how many things Chinese customs are diametrically the reverse of ours" and provides a list of customs for the reader's amusement (1886: 125). Over three decades later, Hardy provides an even more extensive list after remarking that "[t]he Chinese are not only our antipodes with regard to position on the globe, but are also our opposites in almost every thought and act" (1907: 90-94). These extracts are, of course, all grist to the mill of notions of Orientalism as delineated by Edward Said (1978). They are clear instances of the way in which Western "Selves" take it upon themselves to define non-Western "Others". However, it is important to bear in mind the extent to which non-Western peoples construct their own Others. For millennia Chinese discourses have maintained distinctive world views (see Graham 1983), with their own epistemology, which always culminates in "Homo-Sinicus". The perpetuation of the notion of China as the Middle Kingdom is, perhaps, symbolized in the way Chinese television news generally commences with national events. Elisabeth Croll argues that the perceived threat to "Chineseness" through the import of things Western lies at the root of the now almost permanent "spiritual pollution" campaign (1994: 220). The Communist Party may well fear that if it loses the battle to define what is "Chinese" then it will also lose its ability to govern.

An attempt to "read-off" notions of self identities by examining representations of others seems particularly appropriate in Shanghai since Shanghainese themselves both discursively and in quotidian situations often draw sharp distinctions between themselves and other categories of Chinese. In the same way as Malcolm Chapman describes representations of "the Celt" as providing the definers with "a figure of opposition, a mythical alter-ego which they used in pursuit of their own self-definition" (1982: 129) so Shanghainese define themselves in contrast to a universe peopled by various categories of non-Shanghainese. It is to Chinese and Shanghainese identities and to "orientalizing" Shanghai that I now turn my attention.

2.2.2 "Chinese" Identities Before the Reform Era

[T]hat the Chinese are identical in every province of the empire, a man needs not travel over many parts of China to see that this cannot be established by an appeal to reality.
G.T. Lay Chinese Repository (1843 12 (3): 136)

Any attempt to reconstruct ascribed identities prevalent in a previous period to use

as a basis for comparison to the present is clearly fraught with difficulties. Despite this there are enough shreds and patches to piece together a broad outline of Chinese and Shanghainese identities in modern Shanghai. People I spoke to in Shanghai invariably had a strong sense of being "Chinese". In daily encounters my being "a foreigner" would provoke self-designation by Shanghai citizens as "Chinese". However, the sense of belonging to an imagined community of Chinese people coexists with a strong sense of regional identity. In Hong Kong, Barbara Ward (1985: 68-9) describes how Hong Kong fisherman may adopt various designations - for example, "we Cantonese", "we Chinese", "we water people" - depending upon the context and matter under discussion. She notes that Cantonese boat people and Hakka farmers who have very different languages and customs both say "we Chinese" in contrasting themselves to "foreigners" (1985: 68-71). Similarly, Lawrence Crissman found that amongst overseas Chinese communities ethnicity was "relative and situational" (1967: 189). In examining Chinese and Shanghainese identities I am, therefore, "freezing" identities which are contingent, over-lapping and in flux. I share Helen Siu's approach that "'Chineseness' is not an immutable set of beliefs and practices, but a process which captures a wide range of emotions and states of being" (1993: 19). For these reasons I prefer to talk of "being Chinese" and "being Shanghainese", emphasizing the potentialities for assertions of these identifications.

Sinologists such as Myron Cohen who have written on "being Chinese" describe "the ongoing crisis of identification" in the twentieth century (Cohen 1991: 133). However, I found no such crisis over what constituted the basic attributes of "Chineseness" - it may be that what Cohen and others are detailing is a crisis of the role of Chinese intellectuals. I found, rather, an exceptional degree of agreement and certainty over a "bedrock definition of Chineseness" (Link 1993: 201).[18] A fundamental and pervasive distinction was drawn between Chinese and foreigners (**waiguoren** - "outside country people").[19] This differentiation is made explicit in the phrase: **nei-wai you bie** - there is a difference between the inside and outside.[20] In numerous conversations my presence spurred an endless stream of comparisons between China and other countries. It was evident that "much of what is distinctively Chinese is defined as different from

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[18]Useful essays on this topic appear in the Spring 1991 edition of Daedalus *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today* 120(2) and Dittmer & Kim (eds) 1993.

[19]A distinction so embedded that Chinese migrants in the United Kingdom routinely refer to all residents of non-Chinese descent as **waiguoren**.

[20]This term has a much wider valency. It can also, for example, refer to the difference between Party and non-Party members.

'outside'" (Croll 1994: 220). A typical list of characteristics of "Chineseness" includes: Chinese people are physically distinct (black hair and eyes, yellow skin, small noses)[21] - they have Chinese culture, that is, they speak Chinese language, eat Chinese food in a Chinese way, and have Chinese history (extremely long, with Confucius, dynasties and emperors and so forth). These characteristics were felt, clearly, to distinguish Chinese from other peoples. For instance, on the basis of spending several years in China, speaking Chinese, consuming local food and knowledge of local customs and affairs I was sometimes described as "half Chinese" or "like a Chinese person". However, even if I could speak perfect Chinese and been born in China my facial features and skin colour would preclude me from being fully "Chinese" in popular perceptions.

Apart from overseas Chinese (whom I discuss later), the foreigners who were felt most to resemble Chinese were the Japanese. Although considered "foreign" there was a degree of ambiguity since I was often told that "all their culture came from China". I heard various racist-type stories which could be described as depicting Japanese people as a kind of mutant or deformed Chinese. Most people I spoke with in Shanghai expressed a strong dislike and distrust of Japanese (emotions matched only by the desire to obtain Japanese consumer products). It was not uncommon to hear them referred to as **Riben guizi** (Japanese devils). This dislike was generally attributed to China's suffering at Japanese hands in the Anti-Japanese War. Many informants expressed disgust at the Chinese government's (perceived) current weakness in its relations with Japan.

The assertions of a common Chineseness were made despite, for instance, manifest regional differences in cuisine and dialect. Jenner (1992: 228) describes this as the "myth of the oneness of the Han nation" which belies considerable ethnic diversity within China. Myth or not, my respondents invariably subscribed to this belief in "Chineseness", a belief which can cut across legal citizenships. This can be explained in various ways. Firstly, this degree of certainty is a function of the level of abstraction - in interactions solely between Chinese people great attention may be paid to regional differences. Secondly, the Chinese state has a vested interest in maintaining this "myth". Thirdly, language is of key importance. Anderson stresses language's "capacity for generating imagined communities, building in effect particular solidarities" (1983: 122). Even amongst the majority Han Chinese there are dialects so diverse - Shanghainese and Beijingese for instance - as to be completely mutually unintelligible. Indeed Jenner (1992: 228-9) suggests that rather than a single Chinese language there are "creolized languages of the

[21]See Frank Dikötter (1992) on the "discourse of race in modern China."

Chinese family." However, the notion of Chinese as a single language is underpinned by the cultural dominance of the written language. It is still largely the case that "[i]n China power does not speak - it writes" (Ibid: 184). It is indicative of the privileging of the written word that the term for "Chinese language" is **zhongwen** - "Chinese writing" - whereas "dialect" is **fangyan** - "the speech of the place/locality".

Mark Elvin (1991) provides a fascinating insight into the "inner world of 1830". On the basis of literary evidence he concludes that "the Chinese were already conscious, by this time, of being 'Chinese'" (34). When comparing this sense of Chineseness to the present he finds differences but also distinct continuities in "the patterns of social action, of politics, and of social discipline" (61). Older informants portrayed Chinese nationalism and a strong sense of being "Chinese" as having reached its apotheosis in 1949. The profound appeal of this new "imagined community" was brought home to me by one man's memories of Mao Zedong's speech at Tiananmen in which he announced the creation of the People's Republic. He had watched this in a Shanghai cinema forty four years before and still recalled the great pride he had felt and the "enormous power" of Mao's words "The Chinese people have stood up!"[22] I also met or was told about people who had returned to China in 1949 out of a sense of patriotic duty - many of whom became victims in the Cultural Revolution. Feelings of Chinese solidarity were described to me as enhanced during the Korean War with many Shanghainese volunteering to help in this crusade.

During the Maoist period state controls over the media and everyday life precluded the dissemination of alternative voices.[23] As informants told me, there was only one voice (**zhi you yi ge shengyin**), only one kind of language (**zhi you yi zhong yuyan**) - China only had one mouth (**Zhongguo zhi you yi ge zuiba**). The ubiquitous loudspeakers may serve as a dominant image of this period.[24] Political rhetoric stressed solidarity with and support for other third world and socialist countries and was critical of "bourgeois",

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[22]Mao Tse-Tung 1977: 15-18.

[23]This did not preclude people retaining personal memories of contact with foreigners or their cultural artefacts which contrasted with the official line. However, it is important to bear in mind how powerful an effect state propaganda could have. A strong-willed individual who had undergone thought reform (**sixiang gaizao**) in the early 1950s told me that in this process he began to sincerely doubt his own judgement and, in the words of a slogan of that time, "follow the Communist Party" (**ting dang de hua** - literally "listen to the words of the Communist Party").

[24]According to Nathan (1986: 163) there were some 141 million loudspeakers in use in China in 1974.

"capitalist", "imperialist" countries and especially of America.[25] If identity is asserted in contrast to something, then the Maoist state offered relatively few alternative models. With the important exception of those dubbed "enemies of the people" there was little reason to question what it meant to "be Chinese".

2.2.3 "Shanghainese" Identities Before the Reform Era

Native place identification and persistent regional stereotypes have a long history in China.[26] There are many historical examples of the role played by native place identifications in Shanghai (e.g. Shiba 1977, Jones 1974, Sang 1982) and Emily Honig (1989a, 1989b, 1990, 1992) provides evidence of a continuing historical prejudice against Subei people (**Subeiren**) in Shanghai. Ethnic identification can be self-ascription or ascription by others. In the case of subordinate groups "ethnic affiliation may originate in an *attribution* of collective identity to them on the part of others" (Comaroff 1987: 305).[27] **Subeiren** in Shanghai are an example of the way in which "[t]he boundaries of pariah groups are most strongly maintained by the excluding host population" (Barth 1970: 31). However, where Honig's key concern is with the stigmatized category mine is with the defining population and what these stereotypes "say" about the definers.

Shanghai citizens often identified themselves as Shanghainese. In local media,

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[25]Note He Di's comment that Mao Zedong "deliberately shaped a distorted image of the United States for consumption by the Chinese people" (1994: 148), even though he himself "saw the American people positively" (155).

[26]It is interesting to note the extent to which early British travellers and residents in China also engaged in a discourse on regional stereotypes. Early visitors to Shanghai often favourably contrasted the "peaceable and hospitable community" at Shanghai to the "furious and ignorant mob" of Canton (Forbes 1848: 13). Similarly, Fortune (whose comments on "northern Chinese" refer to Shanghainese) remarks on the friendliness of "the northern Chinese, who differ widely from their haughty and insolent countrymen in the south" (1853: I, 108). Conflicts in the city were often attributed to outsiders, especially Cantonese and Fujianese. For example, an 1848 report mentions that "murderous affrays are very common here among the people from Fukhien" (CR 17(9): 473). Lt-Colonel Fisher, in Shanghai in the late 1850s, described how "the Cantonese swagger about the streets, and give themselves great airs as being far superior to the people of the place. They are generally considered a braver but somewhat lawless race" (1863: 345). The Ningbo men are said to be "more numerous, and far more tractable" than these two groups (CR 1850 19(2): 107). Decades later, Ross wrote that "[i]n the South people are smaller, yellower, less manly and less courageous. The ugly wrinkled, cat-like wily Chinaman of dime-novel fiction came for the South. They are quicker of wit than the Northerners but harder for us to understand or trust. Upon the Canton type is built the cherished literary legend of the unfathomableness and superhuman craftiness of the Oriental" (1911: 29). An interesting feature is the degree to which Westerners' comments match stereotypes I heard Shanghainese express in the 1990s (see also Lin Yutang 1935: 1-23). It is interesting to speculate on the degree to which the "Orientalist" stereotypes of Westerner writers might have originated in indigenous discourses rather than vice-versa.

[27]In such cases the "identity imputed to a social group from the outside may be quite different from that same identity as subjectively experienced" (Comaroff 1987: 308). Judith Okely's (1975) study of outsiders' stereotypes of Gypsy women and the latter's self representations is another good instance of this.

Shanghainese identity was frequently asserted with a degree of certainty far greater than one generally finds of, say, English identity. On one occasion I asked a market trader if he was Shanghainese. He replied simply "**wo Shanghai**" - literally "I Shanghai". The way in which this self ascription linguistically conflates personal identification and place strongly suggests a high degree of topophilia. A similar instance of this conflation was the common reference by older informants to themselves as "**lao Shanghai**" ("old Shanghai") or "**women lao Shanghai**" ("we old Shanghai").

Evidence of a "Shanghai difference" goes back several centuries. Linda Johnson writes that a "dichotomy between locals and outsiders can be seen emerging at Shanghai in the Kangxi era" (1993: 163). In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the territory inside the city walls was "largely reserved for official, religious and educational functions, residences, and retail shops... Native-place associations, by contrast, were usually located outside the city wall and were distinguished by their large compounds...enclosed gardens and courtyards" (Ibid: 167). This spatial differentiation between (here Chinese) "outsiders" and city residents is a paralleled by the residence restrictions which are still placed upon foreigners and rural migrants (see Solinger 1995: 126) in Shanghai.

Shanghai's rapid development from the early nineteenth century onwards and especially in the first decades of the twentieth century provided fertile ground for the development of notions of Shanghainese sophistication and superiority over rural Chinese. Such ideas were well-formed by 1949. Richard Gaulton describes how during the early days of Communist rule in Shanghai "sophisticated Shanghainese...circulated tales of the innocence and naïveté of the peasant troops of the PLA. 'Yokel stories' about the misadventures of soldiers were common" (1981: 43).

Shanghai residents often drew attention to differences between themselves and other categories of Chinese people - many of these distinctions predate 1949. Various levels of intra-regional comparison were made. At the largest scale was a broad distinction between the cultural background and habits of those from north and south China.[28] Shanghainese included themselves in the category "southerners".[29] Typically and stereotypically "southerners" were portrayed as good at business, sharp (*men kɛ*

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[28]Ramsey points out the north-south language divide in China (1987: 19-26). North of the Yangtze River **putonghua** dominates and there is "extraordinary linguistic unity". To the South are non-Mandarin dialects and linguistic heterogeneity.

[29]Guldin (1984: 149) comments that in Hong Kong, "Shanghainese" is a catch-all term for all central and sometimes even northern Chinese.

jing/**menkanjing**) and quick-witted, "northerners" as comparatively slow-witted, honest (**laoshi**) and traditional.

Residents also drew attention to differences between Shanghainese and Chinese from different towns or provinces of China. A particularly comprehensive list was provided by a Shanghai resident in his late sixties. He outlined six groups about whom Shanghainese have particularly strong feelings - those from Shandong, Shaoxing, Ningbo, Subei, Beijing and Canton. From further interviews it became evident that the first three groups (and for many of my informants Subei too) were primarily of historical (i.e. pre-1949) interest.[30] I examine representations of Beijingers and Cantonese in the next section since they appear more relevant to the current situation.

It is unnecessary to outline all the historical representations. A few brief comments on **Subeiren** may serve as an example. My informants agreed that Shanghainese had looked down on them because they had engaged in the lowest status jobs (**zui dideng gongzuo**) such as street sweepers, night soil collectors, rickshaw pullers and pedlars but, above all, because they were perceived of as ignorant, poor, dirty, and rough/crude, without culture/education (*me ven ho*/**meiyou wenhua**,[31] *dziong*/**qiong**, *o tso*/**zang**, **culu**). From such representations of **Subeiren** one can "read off" the opposite factors as indicating what "Shanghainese" are believed to be like. If **Subeiren** are despised as ignorant, poor, dirty, and rough/crude, then Shanghainese are cultured, wealthy, clean, and refined. However, I would argue that in the 1990s the category of migrant workers (**mingong**) which I discuss later had superseded "**Subeiren**" as a far more visible and frequently discussed category of vilified others.

It is obviously difficult to assess the vitality of "Shanghainese" identities during the Maoist period. However, various informants suggested that Shanghai residents' sense of superiority was enhanced during the Maoist period. There are good reasons to posit fertile soil for at least the retention and, perhaps, the strengthening of such identities. The creation of strict urban-rural boundaries from the 1950s onwards mentioned above played a part in this since it entrenched urban privileges such as better educational opportunities, job security and welfare benefits.

With no foreign brand labels to compete with, across China products labelled

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[30]The status of **Subeiren** in Shanghai has been well documented, to reiterate this adds little to my argument. I would add that there was substantial disagreement among my informants about the contemporary persistence of this prejudice - some considered it an historical matter, others regarded it as still prevalent and, often, as based upon firm grounds.

[31]On **wenhua** see Chapter 1, footnote 42.

"Made in Shanghai" were the supreme cachet of quality and sophistication. At the same time the strict migration controls and limited possibilities for travel gave the city an allure made all the greater by its unavailability. Former rusticated youth were clearly aware of Shanghai's superiority and often spoke resentfully of having been "assigned out of Shanghai" (**fenpei dao waimian** - literally "assigned outside"). A typical Shanghainese conception of rural China is abundantly clear in a scene redolent with symbolism in the play Yesterday's Longan Tree.[32] A group of "rusticated" Shanghai youth are walking through a forest in Yunnan, approaching their destination in the countryside. One of them throws aside his case of books with the comment that they would not be needed any more.[33]

Alongside the relatively privileged status of Shanghai residents there were also grounds for resentment over the city's treatment by the central government. After 1949 the new government was dependent upon Shanghai for funds. Until the reform era, the city provided one-fifth to one-fourth of central government revenue (Jacobs & Hong 1994: 226). Many Shanghainese were resentful of these expropriations. A scientific research worker told me that residents were often short-tempered and quarrelsome "because Shanghainese cannot accept (**xiangbutong**) the way that they create so much wealth and the state takes 80% of it while conditions in Shanghai deteriorate."[34] Lack of change in Shanghai's architecture from the Communist takeover until the early 1980s was a source of much complaint. A bitter story I was told several times described how when people who fled to Taiwan returned to visit Shanghai for the first time in decades they found everything just as they had left it.

An article in **Duzhe Wenzhai** titled "Great Shanghai, Can You Still Carry China?",[35] commented that when Shanghainese visit Beijing and see its new, tall buildings they will feel "[o]ut of each of these ten buildings, five were built with Shanghai's money!" (43). According to this article "some people calculate" that if since 1949 the proportion of Shanghai's wealth handed over to the central government had been the same as other places "at the very least it would now have attained the same economic

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[32]**Zuotian de Guiyuan Shu** by the Shanghai playwright Xu Pinli, who was herself sent to Yunnan.

[33]There are other notions of the countryside. For example, a retired man expressed nostalgia for his childhood in rural Pudong where it was "very clean" and the air good.

[34]During 1950-83, Shanghai handed over 86.8% of its funds to the central government, this figure stood at about 80% in 1993 (Jacobs & Hong 1994: 231-32).

[35]"**Da Shanghai, Ni Hai Beideqi Zhongguo Ma?**" Readers Digest September 1992: 42-7.

level as Singapore." It adds that in the ten years 1979-88, Shanghai provided enough money to the central government to build two cities the size of Shanghai. I often heard the complaint that "just one district in Shanghai gives as much to the central government as the whole of Guangdong province." Since in the early 1990s Shanghai contributed at least twelve times as much to central government revenues as Guangdong this seems a reasonable estimate (Jacobs & Hong 1994: 228). Indeed, it seems that in 1992, just one Shanghai company - The *Shanghai Cigarette Company* - paid as much tax as the whole of Guangzhou Municipality (Ibid: 234).

In the early 1990s the sense of a Shanghainese identity fostered through a feeling of shared unfairness was very evident to me. However, I am unable to ascertain *when* this sense was formed. I suspect that it was strengthened during the reform era when possibilities for comparison became more available. For instance, more people could now travel to Beijing and it was only recently that figures of taxes handed over by Shanghai Municipality to the central government were in the public domain. It may well be that this sense of resentment reached its peak when the very policies which underscored it were in the process of being ameliorated as Shanghai began to retain a higher proportion of its revenues and there was a greater degree of local autonomy.

2.3 Opening Shanghai's Boundaries: Identities in the Reform Era

The reform era has been marked by a general relaxation of boundaries and increasing fluidity. Zhao and Womack describe a distinct shift from the pre-1980s "autarkic localism of cellular decentralization" to "market localism" (1994: 144). A significant consequence of "the centrifugal effects of diversification" (Ibid: 132) and an increasing "national division of labour" (Goodman 1994: 2) has been the flow of power from the centre to the region. As Segal (1994) points out this includes a decentralization of both economic and political power. Present trends are towards "informal variants of federalism" (Ibid: 351). Evidence of this is the emergence, since the late 1980s, of regional economic protectionism.[36] Shanghai's reintegration into the world economy is paralleled by an increase in the power and influence of the city authorities and business enterprises. As one Shanghai resident succinctly remarked "they say that the central authorities are in control but in reality each place takes care of itself." Similarly, a retired man, a Party member expressed concern that "as gradually local places have money and the state has none, in the future each place will only be concerned with its own situation

[36]See Goodman 1994: 2, Madsen 1990: 253, Prybyla 1989: 12, Swaine 1990: 25-6.

(**difang zhi guan ziji de qingkuang**)."

An example of increasing local autonomy which may serve as a microcosm of wider changes concerns entrance exams for Shanghai university places. Before the reforms applicants took a unified, national exam. Entrants now took unified Shanghai or Jiangsu province exams. In 1993, Shanghai's Industry University (**Gongye Daxue**) began to set its own entrance exam. A teacher told me that this was a return to before 1949 when each university set its own entrance exam.

Shanghai's boundaries had become far more porous. With the opening up of Shanghai's economy and large scale construction works underway the city was once again a powerful magnet for capital, tourists, entrepreneurs and migrant labourers. In 1992, utilized foreign investment in Shanghai totalled US $3,357 million, an amount equal to the accumulated total of the previous twelve years.[37] Migration patterns were becoming closer to those of the pre-Maoist period.[38] Shanghai residents were no longer compelled to leave the city and rural migrants had more opportunities to work and live in Shanghai. Over the last few years large numbers of rural residents have come to Shanghai in search of employment, attracted, in part, by propaganda about the vast 350 square-mile enterprise zone of Pudong New District, established in 1990. This is officially described as "the hope of Shanghai" which "is expected to become East China's most developed and open zone, like Shenzhen in South China."[39]

Shanghai's "floating population" (**liudong renkou**), that is people without Shanghai household registration, rose from some four percent of the population in 1982 to over one-quarter in the mid-1990s (White 1994: 86). Most are from rural areas of Anhui, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shandong and engage in small scale peddling and trading, construction work (**mingong**), agricultural work on farms in Shanghai's suburbs,[40] work as household servants or maids. In many respects, "Chinese exploitation of internal migrants is comparable with the treatment of, particularly, foreign migrant labour in other countries" (White 1994: 149).

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[37]Jacobs & Hong 1994: 245.

[38]For a detailed study of the categories of urban in-migration in post-Mao China see Chan (1994: 114-41).

[39]"Pudong New Zone Develops at a Sizzling Pace" CD 15 January 1993: 4.

[40]A local economics professor who conducted a survey in Shanghai's suburban Baoshan county told me that half its contracted out land was contracted to non-Shanghainese - the original inhabitants engage in industrial work or commercial activities.

Apart from maids who lived in residents' households, migrants were generally segregated spatially from the resident population (see Solinger 1995).[41] Construction gangs mostly lived in wooden huts or under canvas awnings. Their recruitment and organization was often dealt with by autonomous labour bosses (**baogongtou**), an occupation well known in pre-1949 China. These figures were demonized as cruel exploiters in Communist propaganda literature such as Xia Yan's (1959) semi-fictional account Indentured Labourer (**Baoshen Gong**). **Baogongtou** fulfil a similar brokering role between urban and rural as compradors between local people and foreigners. Market traders and the unemployed tended to congregate around suburban parts of Shanghai at the intersection of urban/suburban transport nodes such as Wujiaochang. Less successful migrants occupied marginal spaces within the city - they sleep on the streets, beg and may scavenge amongst the rubbish in such places as the bank of the pestilent Suzhou Creek.

With the flow of people into Shanghai there is considerable evidence to support Lynn White's assessment that since the 1970s "the state has lost most of its previous ability to control where people lived" (1994: 94). However, my own research suggests that this conclusion is rather overstated. Although weakened, the **hukou** system is still important. Indeed I heard complaints that only those engaged in low status jobs could circumvent the **hukou**. According to Chan, around two-thirds of urban in-migration is "informal" (1994: 120), with formal migration still strictly controlled (144). A city **danwei** could recruit people without a Shanghai **hukou** but this was very costly. In one instance I knew of a **danwei** which paid 60,000¥ to obtain a **hukou** also had to arrange accommodation for the employee. Non-Shanghainese could obtain a Shanghai **hukou** if they came to care for an elderly relative or to replace a relative who had left Shanghai. In one case in my acquaintance, it took three years to circumnavigate the bureaucracy involved. Thus the boundaries were differentially "porous".

Since social boundaries are called into being by the exigencies of social interaction (Cohen 1985: 12), it is of particular importance to pay attention to Shanghai residents' comments on these people. However, before examining the impact of rural migrants upon identities in Shanghai I outline representations of contrasts between Shanghainese and Beijingers; a set of oppositions which indicates a redefinition of Shanghainese identities in the reform era.

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[41] As is clear in Sidsel Larsen's (1982) account of Catholic and Protestant residents of Kilbroney in Northern Ireland, proximity of residence, in itself, may do little to promote mutual understanding.

2.3.1 Shanghainese/Beijingers

In a conversation with the Shanghainese manager of a stock exchange he compared Shanghai to Beijing. He outlined a series of oppositions, the following list is a compilation of his views and those of other respondents. It is worth noting that most informants expressed morally positive views of Beijingers. Even Beijingers perceived ready resort to violence was taken as evidence of their straightforwardness. The only real note of discord was the occasional suggestion that they were arrogant, a characteristic attributed to Beijing being the city of government.

Shanghai/Haipai	Beijing
Financial and commercial centre	Political centre
Open (**kaifang**)	Closed (**bisi**)
Immigrant population (**wai laide**), mixed race (**hunxue**)[42]	Indigenous (**benshen**) in population and culture
Future	Past, backward looking
Literature	History
Popular culture (comic plays)	"Serious" culture (Beijing opera)
Mental action (**dong zuiba**, **dong naojin**), arguing	Physical response (**dong shou**), fighting
Concerned with matters that affect them personally (**juti de dongxi**)	Concerned with national affairs (**xihuan guan daguo shi**)
Sharp, clever (**jingming**, **congming**, *men kɛ jing*)	Straightforward (**shuangkuai**), easily taken in, simple-minded (**laoshi**)

To this list I add the comments of two other informants. A Shanghainese professor told me:

> Shanghainese are open-minded (**kaifang**) and 'coastal style' (**haipai**) - they can accept Western things. But Shanghainese exclude outsiders (**paiwai**).[43] They see Beijingers as **lao tu** (unrefined - **tu** also means soil, earth; land; local, native; indigenous) who just drink tea whereas Shanghai people drink beer and beverages (**yinliao**). Shanghainese are shrewd (**jingming**).

A young teacher remarked that Shanghainese have a better relationship with foreigners than

[42]Many people I spoke with accepted a eugenic view that the children of parents from different population groups (including different provinces of China) are more intelligent. Dikötter (1992) describes how such ideas were popularized in China during the late nineteenth century. He comments that some saw "interracial marriage...as a means of strengthening the people of the empire" (87).

[43]Generally **paiwai** (anti-foreign; exclusive - literally "exclude the outside") refers to foreigners, but this man was clearly referring to other Chinese.

do other Chinese because of Shanghai people's historical interaction with foreigners. He felt that:

> Northerners have still not lost the Qing dynasty sense of superiority (**youyuegan**). It is Shanghai that most accepts Western culture. Guangzhou is developed but unrefined/unenlightened (**tu**), for example, they don't eat Western food, they are still stuck with the same old way of doing things (**lao yi tao**). Shanghainese, by contrast, visit Western style restaurants and wear Western style suits. So Shanghai is the best place to be open to the outside (**duiwai kaifang**).

The conflation of the terms **kaifang** and **haipai** in these comments is particularly interesting. **Haipai** - "Shanghai style" or more loosely "coastal style" was a term originally used to describe the distinctive way in which Beijing opera was sung in Shanghai. It was subsequently used to describe a school of literature (**haipai wenxue**) which flourished in Shanghai in the 1920s and 30s. As a genre it was experimental, Western-influenced and iconoclastic. The term may also be used of an individual's style, say, of management. The term **kaifang** has various resonances (as outlined in Chapter 1). It denotes the "Open Door" policy and in everyday use may mean "openness" and "open-mindedness" with a range of valuations from broad-minded to morally lax. Many Shanghainese considered Shanghai more **kaifang** than, say, Beijing because it is a city comprised mainly of immigrants (**yimin chengshi**) and because it was a cosmopolitan city in the past. Moreover, since Shanghainese were already **haipai**, in a sense they were **kaifang** before the **kaifang** policy.[44]

It is interesting to recall here the contrast made in the Chinese documentary series "River Elegy" between the enclosed, stagnant, and insular mentality of "yellow culture" (China) and the open, dynamic, and exploratory spirit of the "blue ocean" (the West). These contrasts closely parallel those outlined above of "Beijing" and "Shanghai". It should, of course, be borne in mind that many of my informants had seen and been influenced by (some referred to it directly) this series. It had presumably played a part in the reorientation of Shanghainese identities.

The self-conception of Shanghainese as intelligent and sophisticated urbanites was also very clear. The notion of Shanghainese as shrewd "maximizers" was evident in comments people made to me about the demonstrations in Shanghai during Spring 1989. One middle aged Shanghainese women noted that the voices one heard during the demonstrations "were all those of **waidiren** (non-Shanghainese)." Similarly, some

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[44]It is interesting to compare these comments to those of Lt. Forbes who in 1848 wrote that "[t]he English merchant at Canton is almost a prisoner in his house" (2). By contrast, he found Shanghai "a city especially open to the foreigner" (14).

informants contrasted the way Shanghai's **laobaixing**, unlike those in Beijing, backed down from a physical confrontation with the army. They considered this contrast as evidence of Shanghai people's "smartness" and also as indicative of the Beijingers courage and concern with national affairs. Other Shanghainese, it should be said, felt no reason to engage in the demonstrations considering them to be part of a struggle for power in Beijing and, therefore, of no concern to themselves.

Chinese currency - old style one *yuan* note

...and new style one *yuan* note

2.3.2 "Outside People" (**waidiren**)

Immediately after Spring Festival 1993 large numbers of rural migrants "flowed" into Shanghai seeking work spurring complaints by residents and consternation in the local media. A Shanghainese friend remarked that it was only at such times that one could see Shanghainese identity asserted. During my seventeen months in Shanghai the barrier between Shanghainese and **waidiren** (non-Shanghainese - see below) did indeed seem to be at its most tangible at this time. I had the sense that these "outsiders" were regarded as a part of a threatening Other, overwhelming in its numbers and poverty. With this influx of **waidiren** I sensed almost a siege mentality. At least one newspaper report described these people using terms formerly given to armies from these areas, for example, **Xiang Jun** (Hunan army), **Wan Jun** (Anhui army), **Su Jun** (Subei army) and **Chuan Jun** (Sichuan army). If **waidiren** were perceived of as a threatening army then the battle sites were the streets, pavements, shop counters and buses of the city. I recall a retired man, a party member, asking rhetorically at this time, "China's national situation. So many peasants, what is to be done?" His tone was one of almost hopeless exasperation as though oppressed by the sheer numbers of peasants.

The fear of chaos (**luan**) has deep cultural roots in China (Watson 1992: 75). Shanghainese often prided themselves that their city was well ordered. A young teacher described Shanghai to me as run in a very orderly fashion (**jingjing you tiao**) explaining that "it has had one hundred years of modern (**xiandaihua**) administrative style."[45] Rural migrants were displaced people who brought disorder and aroused the fear of chaos. The media described the arrivals at this time - many thousands of whom slept outside the train station in the freezing cold, wet Shanghai February - as **mangliu** "blindly moving from place to place". Such descriptions seem to deny any sense of rationality on the part of these migrants, contributing to a sense of them as an irrational "Other". The image portrayed of them is akin to the traditional "hungry ghosts" who roam the land. Sedentary residents may fear migrants as they fear ghosts - both may be "angry because they are hungry and homeless" (Wolf 1974: 170).

Many of these arrivals in Shanghai hoped to become **mingong** (labourers working on public projects) and need to be explored within the wider category of **waidiren** of which they form a part. The lack of a proper English term for **waidiren** alerts one to the distinctive nature of this indigenous category. **Waidi** is defined as "parts of the country other than where one is" (CED 1988: 705). With the suffix **ren** - "person", a **waidiren**

[45]Note that his use of the term "modern" is interchangeable with "foreign".

in Shanghai is somebody from another part of China. However, in everyday use **waidiren** often seemed to be restricted to non-urban people. In this sense it is synonymous with the term **xiangxiaren** (*xiang ho nin*) which the dictionary describes as the neutral "country folk", "person from the countryside", but which, in Shanghai at least, has distinctly negative connotations. Negative perceptions of rural Chinese portrayed them as dirty, stupid, ignorant, backward, and poor.[46]

A term related to **xiangxiaren** is **ah xiang** - probably best translated as "bumpkin". I often heard Shanghainese complain about "this country bumpkin" (*di ge a xiang*/**zhige ah xiang**), for instance, for blocking crowded buses with bulky bags or obstructing traffic when they dragged heavy loads through the city. An older informant recalled a pre-1949 story about a **xiangxiaren** called *A Tu Sang* (**Ah Tu Sheng**) newly arrived in Shanghai. All he saw was new and he understood none of it. Subsequently his name was used to describe all people who did not understand new things.

A recent slang term, which not all informants knew, is **bazi**. This term probably derives from the term **xiangbalao** "country bumpkin". One informant described **bazi** as "those from the countryside who have money but don't know how to use it" (**you qian de, danshi bu hui yong de waidi lai de ren**) or who "have money but you can see that they are outsiders." I also heard this expression used of Taiwanese. On one occasion I overheard some workers in a Taiwanese owned company talk about "**Taibazi**". When I asked who this was they became embarrassed and told me that this was how they referred to their Taiwanese boss behind his back. Another instance clarifies the usage of this term and is an interesting example of "front" and "backstage" impression management. A friend introduced me to a former classmate who worked in a real estate company. Several times the latter mentioned that some of their customers were "Taiwanese compatriots" (**Taibao**). As we left my friend was much amused by this, suspecting that the old classmate would undoubtedly use the term "**Taibazi**" on other occasions.

Mingong - labourers working on public projects - were the most visible (Chinese) "outsiders" in Shanghai. A state **danwei** employee told me that "non-Shanghainese (**waidi laide**) want to come to Shanghai in the same way as Shanghainese seek to go abroad." Most **mingong** in Shanghai are from rural China. A university lecturer described **mingong** in the following way:

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[46]These characteristics are remarkably similar to representations of black people - the most "other" of China's others (see Dikötter 1992: 12). However, in popular perceptions rural Chinese are generally seen, unlike black people, as morally good.

> These are the people who do most of the hard manual labour (**kugong**) in Shanghai such as mending roads and building houses. They are mostly peasants from Anhui and Jiangsu province. They are a social problem because they have no houses, live together and have no **wenhua** or self-cultivation (**xiuyang**). After work they have nothing to do so they go out to have a good time (*ba xiang*/**baixiang** = **wan**). They watch films at the cinema, wander the streets, gamble, steal and rape. Many crimes in Shanghai are committed by **mingong**. They have no household registration and the police are unable to control them. Without them to build Shanghai's new roads and housing Shanghai's construction would not happen. But they make Shanghai's society unstable (**bu anding**).

This is a very typical representation of **mingong**. I often gained the impression that **mingong** were regarded as a necessary evil - essential for Shanghai's construction but also the source of public order and social problems. **Mingong** and **waidiren** generally were regarded by many Shanghainese as a considerable threat. They were blamed for making the city even more crowded and for committing many crimes.[47] One informant described **waidiren** as "doing the kind of jobs that used to be done by Subei people." It is my impression that the kind of opprobrium once reserved for Subei people was now increasingly transferred to **waidiren**. In a more general sense, *all* things coming from "outside" (**wai**) are regarded as potentially destructive. Within families, for instance, incoming wives may be regarded as sources of disharmony until thoroughly absorbed by the "inner" (**nei**) circle. From the late 1970s the children of "rusticated" Shanghainese who went to the border regions in the 1950s have been permitted to migrate to Shanghai (White 1994: 74). These newcomers were often described to me as disruptive and as figuring highly among the ranks of child offenders.[48]

2.4 Being Shanghainese

2.4.1 Some Tastes/Flavours of Shanghai

Benedict Anderson suggests that it is important to distinguish the style in which communities are imagined (1983: 15). Anthony Cohen makes the important point that people often "experience their distinctiveness not through the performance of elaborate and specialised ceremonial but through the evaluation of everyday practices (1982b: 6). In Shanghai, I also found that "the sense of belonging" was evoked in rather mundane

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[47]This latter perception appears to be backed up by statistics. In 1983 7% of crime was committed by non-registered people, by 1989 this figure had risen to 31% (White 1994: 90). A Shanghai radio report (cited in FBIS CHI-95-118, 20 June 1995: 62) reported that in the three months March, April and May 1995, there had been 2,956 arrests in the city and that 57.85% of these were of people from other provinces.

[48]A woman who came to Shanghai from Xinjiang under this policy told me that she encountered difficulties when she first arrived. This included discrimination because she spoke Shanghai dialect poorly - people thought she was a **xiangxiaren** and so looked down (**kanbuqi**) on her.

circumstances such as the use of language and joking, through "processes which occur close to the *everyday* experience of life" (Ibid). With a Shanghai resident in her early forties I discussed the ways in which one may tell the regional origin of those who live in Shanghai. She said that one could visibly distinguish Cantonese "because their faces are different". Subei people were "too obvious" - from their behaviour, dress, and dialect. Other groups, she felt, were less visible but could be distinguished by the food they ate.

Building upon these indigenous means of ascribing people to different categories, the representations outlined above and responses to more direct questions about "Shanghainese" identity it is possible to provide some senses of what was considered "Shanghainese". It should be noted that the physical characteristics required to be "Chinese" apply equally to "being Shanghainese". I concentrate upon dialect, cuisine, notions of style and taste, imputed characteristics and behaviour. Each of these are means by which lines of demarcation were drawn between Shanghainese and non-Shanghainese and evaluative judgements made of different types of people residing within Shanghai. First it is important to distinguish contesting representations of where "real Shanghainese" are to be found.

Pudong Or Not Pudong: The "Real" Shanghainese?

Many Shanghai citizens are only first or second generation residents of the city. A majority of my informants described their family home (**laojia**) as being elsewhere in China. A magazine editor told me that "there are very few real Shanghainese" (**zhen zhen de Shanghairen**). People whose families had deeper roots, whose ancestral line (**zuxian**) was in Shanghai, were generally very proud of this. As a rule of thumb I was told that those whose families had been in Shanghai over one hundred years are referred to as "people of this place" (**bendi ren**), others as "coming from outside" (**wai laide**). In practice, however, anyone born in Shanghai described themselves as Shanghainese. A university lecturer, himself proud of being Shanghainese, remarked that "Shanghai people are crossbreeds (**zazhong**), only those in Nanshi district are local (**dangdi**) Shanghainese. The rest are from all over China. It is like New York."

Before coming to Shanghai I had expected that Nanshi would be regarded in this way. A glance at the modern map of Shanghai reveals that Nanshi is the site of the old city. Earlier Western visitors considered this "the real Shanghai" (Gamewell 1916: 140), replete with "enough...foul-smelling alleys, streets of gay shops, beggars and crowds, to satisfy most lovers of the haunting allurements of the Orient" (Ibid: 142). Until 1911, it

was encircled by a wall and is now the circular route followed by the Number 11 bus. This seems straightforward but another resident told me "people from Nanshi are no good, they are all immigrants from Subei." If the residents of Nanshi are not the "real" Shanghainese, then perhaps one must look elsewhere. One informant told me that his mother was born in Pudong and described her as a "true (**didao**) Shanghainese". However, there seemed to be considerable ambivalence as to whether Pudong is Shanghai or not. Often people spoke of coming *from* Shanghai *to* Pudong, or vice versa.

Even in a single conversation a person may both describe Pudongers as "real Shanghainese" and distinguish between "Pudongers" (**Pudongren**) and "Shanghainese" (**Shanghairen**). The confusion is evident in the comments of a retired man who told me that "**Pudongren** are real (**daodi**) Shanghainese, they were all engaged in agriculture until recently. Shanghainese are not prepared to move to Pudong, it is lower one level (**di yi ji**)." I have no neat solution to this paradox. However, it is important to state that this was only a paradox for me as an analyst, it highlights the extent to which an anthropologist is dealing with flexible and fluid notions which may, or may not, eventually "congeal" or become systematic. My overwhelming impression is that in everyday contexts when people spoke about "Shanghai" and the characteristics of "Shanghainese" they were referring to those who live in the (wholly urban) ten city districts of Puxi and not Pudong or the suburban counties of Shanghai. However, there was no need for them to specify *where* Shanghai is when discussing "Shanghainese". Although evidence that one was born within Shanghai's political boundaries would constitute "proof" of officially being "Shanghainese" in other respects "being Shanghainese" is a de-territorialized notion, involving a composite of certain ways of behaving.

Speaking Properly

R.D. Grillo writes that language is a major element in "the construction of "difference" both within and between countries of Europe" (1989: 2). In China, dialect is an equally important marker in definitions of Self and Others. It is a key way in which distinctions between **nei** (inside) and **wai** (outside), inclusion and exclusion, are created. It is important to recognise that dialects of Chinese differ as much as Romance languages (Ramsey 1987: 4-5). This creates a very real boundary - if Shanghai citizens speak in

Shanghai dialect other Chinese, who do not speak a Wu dialect, will be excluded.[49] The central importance of language was made abundantly clear in an informant's response to my question: In Shanghai who are **waidiren** ("outsiders")? - "People who cannot speak Shanghai dialect." Similarly, a teacher in her early twenties who felt that "the **Subeiren** in Shanghai now are second and third generation and have been assimilated (**tonghua**)" explained that "among our generation there is no conception of Subeiren contrasted to Shanghainese, we are all Shanghainese, we all speak Shanghai dialect." Another resident remarked that although Shanghainese can understand **putonghua** if one speaks to them in Shanghai dialect they "immediately feel an intimacy (**qinqigan** - literally "a feeling of belonging to the same family") and a **moqi** ("tacit understanding") in the relationship. It is important from an emotional (**ganqing**) point of view."

Shanghai dialect is clearly an important focus for a Shanghainese identification. However, the confusion over who are "real" Shanghainese spills over into the dialect. I was often told that Pudongers speak "true" (**zhenzhong**) or "standard" (**biaozhun**) Shanghai dialect. However, people may also distinguish between "Shanghai dialect" (**Shanghaihua**) and "Pudong dialect" (**Pudonghua**). Some respondents, including a magazine editor, told me that "the most standard Shanghai dialect is spoken in Nanshi and Huangpu districts." A little later he added that "no Shanghai dialect exists." This view was based upon a perception that the various waves of immigrants to Shanghai had distorted and submerged an original dialect under the admixture of their own dialects and vocabularies. Many respondents described Shanghai dialect as **hunhe** - a mix or blend and heavily influenced by Ningbo and other dialects. English is another encrustation. One man remarked that his 82 year old father who used to work in a foreign bank still uses some pidgin English (**yangjingbang**) such as *te le fen* (telephone).[50] A new rising tide was depositing Cantonese terms upon the dialect. Within the city zone itself people did not appear to be able to distinguish differences in dialect based upon spatial location. Instead, indigenous categorisations tended to stress differences based upon educational level with, for example, contrasts between "cultured" (**wenya**) and "slang" (**suyu** or **shijingyu** - "city well language") Shanghai dialect. A Shanghai academic described the latter as "very poor (**cha**), obscene (**xialiu**), lower class (**diceng**), and hooligan (**liumang**)

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[49]Shanghai dialect belongs to the Wu dialect family which is spoken in the Yangtze delta and coastal region around Shanghai and has some 80,750,000 speakers (Ramsey 1987: 87-95).

[50]The term **yangjingbang** (Yangjing Creek) originates from a place in Shanghai. It is interesting that term for the linguistic encounter of English and Chinese uses the name of one of spatial locations where these encounters first took place.

vocabulary."

Grillo notes that languages and their speakers are usually of unequal status, power, and authority and that "there is commonly a hierarchical ordering of languages, dialects and ways of speaking" (1989: 1). Since the May Fourth Movement in 1919 many Chinese have regarded a common language as essential to modernising China. Ramsey characterises this as the "spread of northern influence" (1987: 27). After 1949, Shanghai dialect was gradually excised from official contexts and the media. In 1956, **putonghua** was officially adopted as the national language to be used in government and public life and promoted in all educational institutions - it is the "dominant language" (Grillo 1989) in the Shanghai diglossia.[51] The editor mentioned above told me that in the 1950s there were some books in Shanghai dialect. During 1992-4, local newspapers such as **Xinmin Wanbao** occasionally used a few words of Shanghai dialect. However, the editor considered that the media "dare not use more because of pressure from above (**shangmian yali**)."

Occasionally people did assert a sense of pride in the dialect. For instance some pointed out that it retains much classical Chinese. Others considered the dialect "vivid" (**shendong**), "rich" (**fengfu**) and "colourful" (**secai**) since it has "vocabulary from all over China" (**waidi laide hua**). Informants would stress that some dialect vocabulary cannot be translated into **putonghua** and that even when similar to **putonghua** it has a "different flavour" (**midao**). I suggest that this is a useful metaphor to conceptualize the relationship between "Shanghainese" and "Chinese" identities.

Despite such comments I found no evidence of a political - including in the non-formal sense - assertion of Shanghainese identity in the form of actively wishing to promote or propagate the dialect. For instance, I never heard anybody complain about the lack of media in Shanghai dialect. Young people greatly appreciated popular music in Cantonese dialect and **putonghua** but when I ventured the possibility of a pop song in Shanghai dialect this was invariably greeted with derision. In addition, if people used Shanghai dialect on the radio or television they frequently apologised for this, saying that their inadequacy in **putonghua** (often due to lack of practice) made it easier for them to use the dialect. Grillo remarks that in some cases certain ways of speaking have considerable prestige - such as upper-class English - but are not always universally admired or respected (1989: 171). In Shanghai, by contrast, many Shanghainese told me

[51]Grillo defines "dominant language" as "a variety characteristically employed by those occupying superordinate positions" (1989: 12).

that they liked the Beijing dialect (to which **putonghua** is closely related).

Reactions to my own attempts to study the dialect were informative. They highlight the perception, and it seems acceptance, that **putonghua** is the speech of education, knowledge and ultimately power, whilst the dialect is only for conversation (**kouyu**). If I tried to use the dialect people were pleased. But if I suggested that I wanted to "study Shanghainese" in an academic context this usually provoked disbelief and bemusement. If my wish to study the dialect was taken seriously I would usually be told that this was a waste of time "because Shanghainese can all speak **putonghua**." A young worker in a joint venture also remarked "why do you want to study Shanghai dialect? Shanghainese now want to study Cantonese." A rare instance when my wish to study the dialect was taken seriously indicates the relative status of Shanghai dialect and **putonghua**. On this occasion an academic told me that I would need to use Shanghai dialect when talking "to ordinary, uneducated Shanghai people (**putong, meiyou wenhua de laobaixing**)."

I observed that many intellectuals spoke **putonghua** with their children (also Ramsey 1987: 30). They considered facility in **putonghua** as the child's route to success and seemed to feel at most only a twinge of regret that their children did not (and sometimes could not) speak the dialect. It seemed that their identity as parents overrode that of being Shanghainese. The status of Shanghai dialect was also made clear in a dialect comedy (**huajixi**) version of the play "*OK Stock*" shown in November 1993. All the characters used various Wu dialects except for a professor who used **putonghua**. Other characters also tended to use **putonghua** when they spoke with him.

Eating Properly

Food is an important marker of both Chinese and intra-regional identities. The comments on Beijingers and Cantonese presented above highlight distinctions of this kind - Shanghainese open-mindedness, modernity, Western orientation and sophistication as manifested in their consumption of Western meals, beer and other beverages were favourably compared to Beijingers tea drinking and the inability of Cantonese to appreciate Western food. Instances where the regional origin of Shanghai residents may not otherwise be "visible" includes Ningbo people. The female informant mentioned above told me that one can only tell Ningbo people from the food they eat - they prefer salty, pungent (**chou**) foods such as strong-smelling preserved bean curd. Similarly, Hunanese eat very hot food - "so their neighbours can tell where they are from."

I encountered the symbolism attached to food in my own activities. One morning, with a family, I ate a breakfast of rice porridge (**paofan**), flat bread (**dabing**) and fried dough sticks (**youtiao**). This was described to me as "the most typical Shanghainese breakfast (**dianxing Shanghairen chide zaofan**)." On another occasion - as so often as an outsider I only become aware of boundaries by transgressing them - I was planning a train journey out of Shanghai with some Chinese friends when I suggested that we take some steamed bread (**mantou**) to eat on the train. The response was that this would make us like country bumpkins (**xiangbalao**) and that we had better take something else instead.

Dressing Correctly

Style and sophistication were often regarded as key markers of being Shanghainese. On this subject my female respondent noted that one could often distinguish the regional origin of people by their aesthetic taste (**shenmeiguan**). She remarked that:

> Shanghainese are really good at dressing up, they know what is appropriate (**deti**), they like softer colours and have a good sense of colour coordination. **Subeiren** like bright green and bright red - it looks very vulgar (**suqi**). They also wear different colours all jumbled up (**luan chuan**). It is becoming harder to spot **waidiren** as they dress better now. This is especially true with Cantonese, you cannot distinguish them by their clothing, they are integrated (**lianxi**) with Hong Kong and Taiwanese, their clothing is Hong Kong style (**Ganghua**). However, you can tell other **waidiren** by their clothing.

After being compelled to abandon adornment during the Maoist years fashion had returned to Shanghai with a vengeance. Shanghainese, the younger generation especially, had abandoned blue and green "Mao suits" and black canvas shoes. Such apparel marked out the wearer as a "country person". It was a source of considerable amusement when foreign women wore such "peasants' shoes". This new fashion consciousness was alluded to by the spread of the term **xiaosa** meaning "stylish" which became popular through a Taiwanese pop song. A young teacher gleefully told me that the men seen with the brand label of their suits on the jacket cuffs "are all **xiangxiaren**, it is a question of quality (**suzhi**). They are afraid that others will not be able to see the price of the jacket from its quality and appearance." In explaining the use of the term **xiangxiaren** to me, one man gave an example - if somebody looks at a watch and does not recognize that it is a famous brand one may say "are you a **xiangxiaren**?" However, it appeared that dressing correctly was still not enough. A wealthy young share dealer from Hunan studying in Shanghai complained to me that Shanghainese are "urban petty bourgeois" (**xiao shimin**) who "exclude outsiders" (**paiwai**). He added that "even if you wear expensive clothes,

Shanghainese will still look down on you if you are not Shanghainese." Such notions of fashion and style, surely profitable to clothing producers, also intersected with emergent consumer and generational identities - significant features in 1990s Shanghai.

Behaving Properly

Various characteristics and types of behaviour were routinely ascribed to "Shanghainese" both by themselves and others. Extremely common was the notion of "cleverness". This was described in various ways ranging from the unambiguously positive **congming** - intelligent or clever - to **jingming** or *men kɛ jing* (**menkanjing**) - sharp, astute, shrewd - and **xiao congming** - cleverness in petty things. The dialect term *men kɛ jing* is particularly interesting, *men kɛ* is the threshold of a door, and *jing* - shrewd or sharp. With the prevalence of socio-spatial metaphors as outlined in the previous chapter I was keen to seek the origins of this term. However, none of my informants could enlarge upon its antecedents, it simply meant what it meant, although one young lecturer suggested that it derived from "Monkey King". Often popular representations located Shanghainese as mid-way between Beijingers and Cantonese, for instance, Beijingers were too honest, the latter too shifty. Both were frequently depicted as insular, Beijingers because of a concern with national affairs and Cantonese by virtue of their attachment to things Cantonese - as one university lecturer told me, they "exclude outsiders (**paiwai**) and have a strong sense of shared native-place (**tongxiang**). Shanghainese, by contrast, are outward looking."

A retired Shanghainese university lecturer told me:

> Shanghainese are very clever (**congming**), they have a high **wenhua** level and have seen a lot (**jianshi guang**). When outsiders (**waidiren**) come to Shanghai, Shanghainese look down on them and call them **xiangxiaren** ("country bumpkins"). This is like saying they are unintelligent (**bu congming**). Shanghainese are arrogant (**zigao zida**). **Waidi** ("outside") to them includes Beijing and Guangdong, not just the countryside. Many people have a bad impression of Shanghainese. They say Shanghainese are too clever and call them *men kɛ jing* - that is, they seek petty advantages wherever they can (**daochu zuan xiao pianyi**). They are not as honest as **waidiren**. Shanghainese are clever in trivial matters (**xiao congming**).

This informant considered that "Shanghainese may be like this because they have engaged in business too much." This is associated with a common perception that business people are dishonest. By comparison peasants were regarded as **laoshi**, a term which means "honest" but includes the notion of being gullible and easily taken in. The sense of Shanghainese cleverness extended to criminal activities. One man told me that "many

crimes are committed by "migrant workers from outside" (**waidi laide**). But they don't have much ability (**benshi bu da**) unlike Shanghai thieves who are *men kɛ jing*."

Attention to bodily hygiene also played a part in being Shanghainese. A young woman commented that Shanghainese, especially women, "pay more attention to hygiene (**weisheng**), they are clean (**qingjie**). Northern girls may not wash every day even in the Summer and in Winter may not wash for weeks on end." One has intimations of notions of purity and danger (cf. Douglas 1966). The common notion in Shanghai that non-Shanghainese bring chaos (**luan**) to the city seems to be paralleled in this depiction of non-Shanghainese as disordered in their bodily hygiene - the "soiled" (**tu**) outsiders are blemishes on the "face" (**mianmao**) of Shanghai. The same speaker also felt that **waidiren** were more generous (**dafang**) than Shanghainese - "they will use all their money to show off. Shanghainese use their money in a way which deploys it most efficiently (**xiaoyi**)." I heard various apocryphal stories in which a **waidiren** and a Shanghainese compare their wealth. In one version they engage in a type of *potlatch* by burning money and throwing away items. Each time the **waidiren** destroys his property only to find that he has been tricked by the Shanghainese who manages to avoid losing his property.

Finally, it is interesting to note an instance of a man who "lost" his Shanghaineseness. At a wedding in the city the mother's brother (**niangjiu**) was invited. He was rusticated during the Cultural Revolution and had not returned to Shanghai. This man insisted that the bride and teetotal groom respond to his toasts by drinking down glasses of beer and became angry when they refused. The bride explained his unreasonable behaviour as related to the fact that he was no longer Shanghainese but "completely a country person (**wanquan shi xiangxiaren**)" - he could no longer speak Shanghai dialect and his behaviour - including his style of consumption - was no longer that of a Shanghainese.

2.4.2 The Vitality of Contemporary "Shanghainese" Identities

Before carrying out research in Shanghai I had speculated on the degree to which a separate and distinctive Shanghainese identity may be asserted. Abner Cohen stresses the importance of analyzing ethnicity in terms of the interconnections with economic and political relationships (1974). Wallerstein (1979: 184) writes that "ethnic consciousness is eternally latent everywhere. But it is only realized when groups feel either threatened with a loss of previously acquired privilege or conversely feel that it is an opportune moment politically to overcome longstanding denial of privilege." With several decades

of large-scale expropriations of Shanghai's profits by the central government, increased local autonomy and regional disparities and an influx of rural migrants during the reform era there would seem to be ample grounds for the emergence of assertive regional "voices". I had expected to find an increased assertion of local identity and assumed that this would in some ways be oppositional to a Chinese identity. These hypotheses are only partially borne out by the evidence. My findings suggest that whilst residents may assert a Shanghainese identity and that "people from Shanghai unabashedly proclaim the superiority of their native place" (Thurston 1983: 23), nonetheless this was not in any sense oppositional to concurrent identification as "Chinese".

I have highlighted the coalescence of Shanghainese identity when faced with an influx of migrant workers. This influx may be taken as a message about the relative prosperity of city and rural areas - their presence an indication of Shanghai's economic progress and/or the poverty of rural China. This influx contributed to the common perception of an increasing divergence between coastal and interior regions (**neidi**). This may reinforce the sense of Shanghai superiority and provoke a fear that rising regional inequalities - alongside those evident between rich and poor within Shanghai - may be a potential source of unrest.

The extent to which migrant workers are held to constitute a threat to the livelihoods of resident workers is a vital issue. In most instances, like Lynn White, I encountered "grudging acceptance of migrants" (1994: 90-1); they are regarded as fulfilling valuable functions, for instance, as construction workers and maids and supplying fresh food as market traders - many people I spoke with considered that the legalization of free markets and the diversity of affordable, good quality food available in them was the most important advantage the reforms had brought to them. In most instances these are occupations which were too lowly paid or unpleasant to appeal to residents, Despite this, residents would express resentment that such people earned more than themselves. I also heard some murmurings of discontent that lowly paid non-Shanghainese workers were undercutting the wages of Shanghai residents. In chapter 1 I noted a newspaper description of migrant workers as a "guerilla force...stealthily entering [Shanghai's] factories."[52] This article described them as presenting a "threat" and a "challenge" to redundant Shanghai female factory workers getting work again.

The owner of a clothing factory in Pudong told me that he employed migrant workers from Anhui on a salary of 200¥ per month - a level that Shanghainese would not

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[52]"'**Youjidui' Qiaoqiaode Jin Chang**" XMWB 22 July 1993: 12.

accept. In order to circumvent **hukou** regulations he also provided their accommodation and meals. This employer had all the advantages of a workforce which was cheap, renewable, dependent, compliant and had limited welfare entitlements. Information on the extent of such practices was difficult to obtain (including for government statisticians) but anecdotal evidence suggested they were increasingly common. I also heard complaints that in seeking contracts with foreign companies non-Shanghainese often undercut (**chaitai** - literally "cut the ground from under somebody's feet") Shanghai companies. One resident remarked that "Shanghainese hope to make a good profit, but the money invested is cut away by non-Shanghainese (**touzi bei waidiren wazou le**)."

I have drawn attention to the coalescence of local resentment in the face of expropriations by the state. Two instances of this occurred during 1993 - over the East Asian Games and Beijing's bid to host the Olympics in 2000. The East Asian Games were held in Shanghai. However, I heard people complain that they were having to pay for an event which would bring national prestige, which for many equalled benefits for the Party elite in Beijing. This resentment was also apparent as China sought to hold the 2000 Olympics. Once again, a common complaint was that Shanghai people would have to finance this event but that all the benefits would go to Beijing. None of these voices appeared in the local press, although some informants gained satisfaction - a definite "weapon of the weak" (cf. Scott 1990) - from evading the overlapping collections for this event which were carried out by **danwei**, schools and residents' committees.

In many countries such a sense of resentment and the problems caused by migrant labour are a source for "racist" movements. Despite apparently fertile soil for assertive regional "voices" and the clear persistence of senses of Shanghainese identity I found little political articulation beyond such "weapons of the weak" as grumbling and complaining and occasional diatribes in the local media against rural migrants. An obvious response is that the Chinese state would prevent any such assertion. However, I also found little commitment to putative "emblems" of ethnic identity such as the dialect. In the case of **huju** - Shanghai opera - my informants described it as "Shanghai **wenhua**" but also as inferior to Beijing opera and as appealing only to "Shanghai peasants" (**nongmin**) and "those without **wenhua**". This would appear to support Cohen's assertion that without commitment to "the culture" there will be limited politicization (1982b: 7).

In private conversations people occasionally suggested that Shanghai would be more prosperous if it were independent. One academic I spoke with felt that China should split up into its provinces. He quoted a traditional saying: **tianxia dashi, fenjiu bihe,**

hejiu bifen - "in all great matters under heaven, there is a time to unite and a time to be divided." He considered this necessary because "China is ossified/bloated (**jianghua**). With it being so large, the economic and political problems are too hard to deal with." However, he added that few acquaintances shared this idea, nor would he dare say this in class since students would inform the authorities and get him into trouble. A scientific research worker also considered it "a shame that Shanghai is not independent, it could overtake Hong Kong if it was." However, she considered such a development out of the question, not least because Shanghai gives so much money to the central government.

I gained the impression that although national expropriations aroused resentment and that migrant workers could stimulate a sense of Shanghaineseness the sense of "all being Chinese" was powerful enough to preclude the development of an assertive regionalism in Shanghai. I found no evidence of local ethnicity taking on "the natural appearance of an autonomous force, a 'principle' capable of determining the course of social life" (Comaroff 1987: 313). With a local family I watched the special programme broadcast during the Mid-Autumn Festival. The programme included selections of operas from different parts of China. As we watched, one of the family commented that the stories acted out in various dramas were the same all over China but that the style in which they are acted out differs. I suggest that this is a highly apposite analogy for the relationship between Chinese and Shanghainese identities.

2.4.3 Further Consequences of Intra-nation Porosity

If increasing decentralization and the influx of migrants tended to enhance a sense of Shanghai distinctiveness there were other consequences of the increasing porosity of Shanghai's boundaries in the reform era which may pull in a different direction. Alongside the inflow of migrants was a broader flow of people both into and out of the city. For instance, with rising prosperity and reduced travel restrictions Shanghainese could now leave the city on business trips, as tourists or honeymooners. Some Shanghainese headed for "the south" (**nanfang**) - the frontier regions of Shenzhen and Guangdong, which because of their early economic liberalization had become a preferred destination for economic migrants from Shanghai. Two local sociology lecturers remarked that in the past Shanghainese were reluctant to leave Shanghai but now several of their students had sought work in Shenzhen and Guangzhou. In many respects, the differences between Shanghai and other parts of China - especially other coastal regions - were becoming less distinct.

Although many people I interviewed gave their **laojia** (home place) as somewhere out of Shanghai the degree of interaction people had with their **laojia** varied considerably. Relationships between Shanghai households and provincial relatives occurred along a scale from non-existent to occasional reciprocal visits - mainly at Spring Festival - to frequent, extensive and intensive relationships. The latter were most likely among first generation migrants, especially if they were influential in some respect. In some instances the destruction of tombs in rural areas by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution served to sever vestigial ritual links with the countryside.

With the relaxation of travel restrictions visits were much more frequent. Amongst one first generation migrant family in my acquaintance interaction with rural relatives in Anhui was intense. Along ties of relatedness flowed information, goods and people, with frequent visits by both maternal and paternal relatives. The father had moved to Shanghai in the 1950s. He maintains links with Anhuinese friends who came to Shanghai at the same time. He also remained embedded in a complex web of personal relationships with rural relations. This included frequent reciprocal visits on ritual and festive occasions, notably Spring Festival and funerals. Visits, with or without notice, by rural relations - sometimes very distantly related - were common. The motives for such visits included petitioning for assistance in disputes in the home village, seeking help with medical treatment or to gain access to Shanghai educational establishments. It was also a place to stay while visiting Shanghai.

The already high degree of permeability in this household across the city\rural boundaries had been enhanced by new technology. This family had had a private telephone for some years and recently an uncle in the countryside had a phone connected. This direct link greatly increased the possibility for contact and involvement in day to day family activities and disputes. It is an interesting instance of the way modern technology can allow "traditional" ties to be resuscitated and/or enhanced. More generally within China, new technologies were overcoming the "friction of distance". For instance, the Shanghai share market, already an important forum through which the city has rewritten itself into the Chinese map, has an increasingly sophisticated communications network, including satellites, which link up many parts of China to the Shanghai market.

The Cultural Revolution policy of sending educated youth to the countryside gave almost an entire generation of young Shanghainese direct experience of rural China. Bonds of friendship formed in these unique and often difficult circumstances are particularly strong. In the entrepreneurial 1990s, contacts between former rusticated youth

now returned to their different urban places of origin and those who remained in rural areas could be an extremely useful resource. In one instance a factory worker in Shanghai had a second job selling bulk orders of leather bags and wallets along the Russian border in Heilongjiang. This utilized connections made during his eleven years in Heilongjiang from 1967-78. It is worth adding that amongst many of the present young generation of Shanghainese I found an extreme degree of ignorance about rural China. It seemed that for them rural China was at least as much of a "foreign country" as was metropolitan Shanghai for myself as an urban "outsider".

Although Shanghai is very much an urban environment the daily act of eating reminded people of their link to the countryside. A retired man told me that "in China it takes eight peasants to support (**yanghuo**) two urban dwellers." I was struck by his conceptualization of a direct relationship between the food he consumed and the physical labour of farmers. This sense is in stark contrast to the overwhelming commodification of food buying and consumption in the West. In addition, there was a cultural stress upon the freshness of food, many items were b ought daily and fish, for instance, was bought whole and alive. People's diet, therefore, was still largely dependent upon the rhythm of the seasons. It is interesting to speculate how far my informant's lack of alienation from food production is the product of years of Maoist propaganda. In the reform era, consumers are perhaps even more aware of the origins of their food since the reemergence of private markets involves them in daily interaction with peasant vendors. However, such direct links to the countryside and the seasons have begun to weaken in the 1990s with the greater availability of prepared, frozen, tinned and imported foods.

Finally, in this section, it is important to note the influence of Canton upon Shanghai. Despite a distinct blurring of Hong Kong/Canton (I examine Hong Kong influence later), people may distinguish between Canton and Hong Kong. In the nineteenth century many Cantonese were attracted to Shanghai - a stereotype persists of the Cantonese comprador. Older informants recalled that before 1949, Cantonese ran businesses such as the *Hualian* and *Wingan* Stores. In 1992-4, a Cantonese presence was again becoming evident in Shanghai. During 1992-3 an average of ten new restaurants opened every day in the city. Some were run by Cantonese and many more professed to serve "Cantonese style food". Additionally, Cantonese breakfast eating (**dianxin/dimsum**) had become popular along with the recently acquired habit (I did not see this in 1988-90) of tapping one's fingers on the table in thanks for a drink being poured.

I heard contrasting views about Cantonese people. A young teacher stated that

until recently Cantonese were looked down on in Shanghai. He felt that money had now become the main criterion for judging people's worth, since Cantonese are rich Shanghainese no longer look down on them. However, a more frequently expressed view was that, as one university student remarked, "Cantonese are **"baofahu" ("nouveaux riches")**, they have money but no **wenhua**." A young Shanghai businesswoman concurred that Cantonese are **baofahu** - a term with a distinctly derogatory meaning - and added that, by contrast, Shanghai is an "aristocratic (**guizu**) society". Another young respondent felt that "Cantonese are crafty (**huatou**), but they defer (**futie**) to Shanghainese since they can't rip them off (**zei**) like they can other people. This is because Shanghainese are sharp (**menkanjing**)."

2.5 Shanghai's Re-internationalization

*Mao Zedong had a closed-door policy (**biguan zhengce**). Deng Xiaoping opened the window (**dakai chuangzi**) and let the wind (**feng**)*[53] *come in, people could see what the West is like.*

Informant's comment

*Vigorously develop Shanghai, open up Pudong, serve the whole country, face the world" (**Zhenxing Shanghai, kaifa Pudong, fuwu quan guo, mianxiang shijie!**)*

National Day slogan 1 Oct 1993[54]

Nothing in the policies of the Deng years has been more dangerous than the attempt to half-open frontiers and minds.

William Jenner (1992: 94)

The increased porosity of Shanghai's boundaries within China has been paralleled by a degree of opening to the outside world. In many respects the "Open Door" policy implemented by the Chinese state since the late 1970s is diametrically opposed to policies of the "closed door" and autarky pursued under Mao. China is now being integrated into the "world of culturally, socially, and economically interconnected and interdependent spaces" (Gupta & Ferguson 1992: 14). My own unsupervised visits to people's homes were indicative and expressive of this change; China's "open door" paralleled by households open doors. Many families told me that such visits would have been impossible during the Maoist era. Even until the mid-1980s few would have dared invite me to their homes.

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[53]On the diverse range of meanings of **feng**, see Chapter 1 above.

[54]One of the slogans written on long red banners hanging from the old colonial buildings on the Bund specially floodlit for the occasion.

In 1984, three hundred years after the lifting of earlier restrictions on coastal trade (an unnoticed anniversary), Shanghai was one of 14 coastal cities granted special privileges and license to engage in foreign trade. In 1992-4 Shanghai's re-internationalization gathered apace - a saleswoman commented to me that Shanghai now had "an international feel" (**guoji de ganjue**). A fashionable term frequently used as a metaphor for China's reintegration into a global space was **jiegui**, **jie** meaning "to connect" or "join" and **gui** "rail, track" or "course, path". This expression indicates an acceptance that the Chinese state is willing, to some extent at least, to adapt its "socialist road" to economic development to one where the agenda is set externally.

As part of the process of **jiegui**, China has begun to make significant changes to its economic and legal framework. For instance, in 1993 China **jiegui**ed the Western accounting system and in January 1994 the dual currency system was abolished.[55] Another term used almost daily in news broadcasts was **dadao guoji shuiping** ("reach international levels") - often used of factory production quality. To **jiegui** in such ways was officially described as essential for China's economic growth and, for instance, to enable China to accede to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (now the World Trade Organization).

Shanghai's re-internationalization has proceeded along various fronts and has brought significant changes to the social, cultural, economic and physical landscapes of the city. Dimensions of global flow are described by Appadurai (1990) as ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideoscapes. I find this approach interesting but problematic. For instance, Appadurai considers that these "people, machinery, money, images, and ideas now follow increasingly non-isomorphic paths" (11) and these flows "are in fundamental disjuncture with respect to one another" (19-20). By implication, this suggests that there was a time when these flows *were* conjunctive and isomorphic - moreover, against what yardstick and by whom would this be judged? It also suggests a discrete and essential existence to features which are intrinsically entangled in practice and only (if then) analytically separable. The problems of lack of separability have been made clear in China where the state has fought hard to adopt foreign technology but avoid "spiritual pollution"; a battle which the Marxist ideology it claims to adhere to would

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[55]When foreigners were first allowed to visit China in any numbers a dual currency system was introduced. Chinese citizens used **Renminbi** (RMB) - "people's money". Foreigners were issued with *Foreign Exchange Certificates* (FEC) which they had to use to pay for purchases including imported goods, accommodation and transportation. Conversely, Chinese citizens were excluded from making certain purchases and staying in certain hotels by their lack of FEC. This dual currency system gradually diminished, not least, as the currency black market became ever more extensive.

suggest is unwinnable. Bearing in mind these caveats I make some brief comments on Shanghai's re-internationalization and then focus upon two elements of global flow - technological and cultural/mediascapes.

2.5.1 Re-internationalizing Shanghai

A key aim of the "Open Door" policy and associated legal changes such as the first Joint Venture Law in 1979 has been to "involve global investors, traders and economic institutions in modernization" (Zhao & Womack 1994: 147). Since 1978 there have been moves to decentralize the economy, in accordance with the general tenet that some should be allowed to get rich first. Local **danwei** and private businesses have been granted greater autonomy in dealing with foreign countries. For instance, they can negotiate directly with foreign buyers and suppliers. Shanghai enterprises increasingly look towards international markets and do their best to escape the rigid, vertical hierarchy which linked them to ministries in Beijing. It is likely that China's (expected) accession to the World Trade Organization will further this process since it will be of most advantage to coastal regions such as Shanghai.

In 1984 provinces were granted the right to retain 25% of their foreign exchange earnings and in 1985 enterprises allowed to retain 12.5% of their foreign earnings. This was increased to 70% for key export sectors in 1988 (see World Bank 1990). In the 1990s state policies have sought to promote Shanghai as an international financial and commercial centre. Controls have been relaxed to allow freer access for foreign companies especially in the Pudong New District, described by a Chinese government spokesman as "a focal point of the country's opening and reform drive in the 1990s."[56] Daily newspaper and television reports herald the arrival (or return) of foreign companies such as *IBM*, *Volkswagen*, and *Pilkingtons*.[57] In the first five months of 1993, 1,559 foreign-funded enterprises settled in Shanghai, making a total of 4,848.[58] An example of a sector opened up to foreign companies since the late 1980s is the market for international courier services - by late 1993 fifteen companies had opened branches in

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[56]"Support for Pudong Not Expected To Waver" CDBW 26 September-2 October 1993: 4.

[57]The *Volkswagen* joint venture plant in Shanghai was set up in 1985. In 1993 it produced 100,000 *Santana* cars and planned to produce 150,000 in 1995 ("VW Set For Windfall After China Ruling" FT 24 June 1994: 4).

[58]"Hot Spot Lures Investors" SS 4 June 1993: 2.

Shanghai.[59] The "Open Door" has allowed foreign consumer items to flood into China and few Shanghai households can be without some foreign-made product.

In the last chapter I noted a saleswoman's comment that "Shanghai now has an international feel." Through the "open door" various foreign employees, students and teachers along with large numbers of foreign tourists have come to Shanghai. However, apart from areas near expensive hotels, foreign consulates, tourist spots such as the Yu Gardens and the Bund, the airport and larger university campuses, non-Chinese nationals were a rare site.

The living space of non-Chinese nationals was strictly controlled and mainly limited to university campuses, expensive hotels or specially designated housing often located near the airport on the outskirts of the city. Foreign enclaves such as the prestigious *Shanghai Center* on Nanjing Road can accurately be described as "self-contained 'mini-cities'" (Gaubatz 1995: 58). Even within university campuses, foreign students were housed in accommodation separate from Chinese students. The two types of currency also served to segregate Chinese and non-Chinese into different spaces. In anthropological terms this segregation could be viewed as a desire to keep polluting matter at a safe distance, an approach with many historical parallels in China. Jenner writes that "[n]o other state in human history has ever put as much effort into walling itself off physically from the outside world as did a number of Chinese dynasties" (1992: 93, also 88-95).[60] Segregation was gradually diminishing, for example, many large hotels and the city's *Friendship Store* which originally admitted only foreigners had begun to welcome wealthy Shanghai citizens.

Foreign companies are now permitted to lease land in Shanghai and this has begun to re-internationalize parts of Shanghai's "face". For instance, Shanghai's main street, Nanjing Road, now has shops such as *Benetton* and Hong Kong's *Sincere* store has returned to a site only a few doors from its former nationalized store. Further along Nanjing Road the *Shanghai Center*, designed by an American architect has an international style hotel, a theatre, various Hong Kong stores including a *Welcome* supermarket, and a Japanese clothes store. In addition, the foreign companies which formerly owned many of the large buildings along the Bund are being encouraged to

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[59]"Time Right for Courier Companies" SS 19 November 1993: 3.

[60]One attempt at containing the "uncontrollable outside world" was the segregation of foreigners to an island in pre-Opium War Canton. This segregation even included prohibitions on foreigners learning Chinese.

return.

2.5.2 Technological Flows

Alongside geopolitical developments and shifting national policies, technological advances have had a significant affect upon Shanghai's "place" in the world. Until the latter part of the twentieth century distances within China and between China and the West could only be "bridged at great cost and sustained over time only with great effort" (Appadurai 1990: 1). For centuries waterways were the most rapid form of transportation. Before the construction of railways a journey across China could take many months. This made a coastal port like Shanghai effectively closer to, say, Hong Kong and Singapore, than much of China's hinterland. Even after the development of railways in the 1950s, a journey to Xinjiang from Shanghai still takes four days by train, to Yunnan and the border with Vietnam 5-7 days, to Guangzhou 36 hours and 17 hours to Beijing.[61] It was only with the development and proliferation of aviation and telecommunications technologies that the spatial and temporal distances between Shanghai and other parts of the world and other parts of China dramatically collapsed. An elderly man reflected on this - he first went from Shanghai to England in 1926, a journey of 31 days by boat. In 1948 he made the same journey by flying boat in five days. In the 1980s he flew to England in little over half a day.

Developments in transportation have been beneficial to Shanghainese who have taken the opportunity provided by the (half) open door to go abroad to work, study or for tourism. Similarly, since the late 1970s many families have renewed relationships with relatives abroad, especially in Hong Kong and Taiwan. This new mobility provides for knowledge and images of other places to be brought or sent back and for comparisons to be made of the recent history and current state of these locations and Shanghai.

Of perhaps greater significance than the physical movement of people is Shanghai's reintegration into the "global space of electronic information flows" (Morley & Robins 1989: 22). One may include here the increasing availability of international direct dial telephones in Shanghai which permit contacts with friends, relatives and business contacts abroad. In the contemporary world it is above all the development of electronic media which "have irretrievably shattered the cloissonéed character of cultural barriers" (Abu-

[61] A BBC World Service *World Business Report* on 15 June 1994, mentioned that Japanese companies are holding talks in China over plans to build a "bullet train" line between Beijing and Shanghai. This would reduce the journey time to seven hours and increase volume threefold.

Lughod 1991: 135). A concomitant of this is that "[t]he media have profoundly changed both social relationships and perceptions of self" (Fitzgerald 1991: 194) and "that identity - in large part, due to media influences - loses its 'place-defined' quality" (201).

Short wave radios are cheap and listening to broadcasts by stations such as the BBC *World Service* and the *Voice of America* were no longer described by the Chinese state as "secretly listening to the enemy radio station" (**touting ditai**). Indeed, it was often encouraged by teachers as a means to improve students' English. On November 5, 1993 many Shanghainese tuned into the VOA whilst at work to hear the results of the United States presidential elections. Increasing awareness of alternative systems of government, which appealed to many citizens, did little to foster support for the Communist Party's style of government.

With some informants news items from the *Voice of America* were a common topic of conversation. One man I spoke with was astonished to hear a VOA report on the arrest of two Chinese dissidents in Shanghai only hours after it had happened, a story not reported by the local media at all. This man considered it a big advantage of the "Open Door" policy that the Chinese government could no longer block (**lanbuzhu**) news. However, it was noticeable that broadcasts from abroad in Chinese were the target of jamming more often than those in English. It is as though the authorities considered it acceptable for the English-speaking elite to hear messages deemed harmful to "the masses".

The intersection of changes in the economic structure and new technologies has begun to enable new types of spatial relationship. An instance from a Sino-German joint venture demonstrates the way Shanghai's re-internationalization has loosened the old boundaries set by the state and permitted new possibilities for action. A worker in this company, which had offices in most of China's main cities, described how in 1991 the Chinese staff in all its main offices took industrial action by refusing to go on business trips until their wages were increased. They could organize this action because staff travel often, know each other well, and could readily transmit news in person or by phone.

The "colonization of leisure" (Sahin & Robinson 1981) by new technologies has been achieved, above all, by television. There is considerable evidence that "television has dramatically influenced the cultural and political consciousness of the people who live in urban China" (Lull 1991: 2). I discuss the impact of television and other mediascapes more fully below. However, both television and radio - with the important exception of recently introduced phone-ins - provide only a one way flow of information. Newer

technologies such as international direct telephone dialling, fax machines and computer link-ups such as E-Mail locate Shanghai residents with access to the appropriate facilities (this is an important caveat) within an interactive global network. Electronic media of this type, which were unavailable to participants in previous protests, played a crucial part in the demonstration of Spring 1989. I was made aware of the potential power of the fax machine in Shanghai on the morning of June 4 (also Warner 1991: 217-22). Displayed on lampposts and the burnt-out buses barricading Shanghai's streets were photographs of the violent suppression of the Beijing student demonstrations earlier that day which had been sent by fax from abroad. Since 1989, information flows have continued to expand. For example, in 1993 the *Shanghai United Information Network* began trial operations.[62] Using this network computer users can access 500,000 Chinese characters of information covering fifteen categories including stock market, real estate, trade and international affairs.

Shanghai's integration into global electronic networks seems set to continue not least because the rapidly growing telecommunications sector is now Shanghai's second largest industry. A China Daily article described Shanghai as China's "capital of telecoms" with the output value from its telecommunications' industries - including digital phone exchanges, fax machines and fibre optic communications equipment - totalling $597.5m in 1992.[63] It is relatively easy to control the flow of people and hard copy such as books and newspapers but the circulation of electronic products is much harder for nation states to control.[64]

The full implications of these developing technologies are uncertain even in the countries where they were first developed. However, it is clear that they create a dilemma for the Chinese party-state, as Tony Saich comments of the CCP elite, "[i]ronically, they have the un-Marxist view that change in the economic base does not imply change in the political superstructure" (1989: 49). The state actively promotes "modernization" - this

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[62]"Network Wires Economic News" SS 19 November 1993: 3.

[63]"Shanghai is Now Capital of Telecoms" CD 6 May 1993: 1. According to the local press "[t]he State has decided to turn Shanghai into the largest fax machine technology development centre in China" ("Venture Advances With Fax" SS 10 December 1993: 3). This article describes the recently set-up *Shanghai Ricoh Fax Machine Company* - a joint venture between Shanghai, Hong Kong and Japanese companies which is expected to produce 400,000 fax machines in 1996.

[64]In 1992, when I flew into Shanghai from Hong Kong passengers were requested, before touchdown, to return the Hong Kong newspapers which had been handed out on the flight. However, various foreign newspapers and magazines are sold at select outlets - such as expensive hotels - within China. According to a Financial Times report BBC journalists in China are currently "subjected to restrictions on their freedom of movement" and BBC programmers denied visas ("BBC Feels Chill From China" 23 May 1994: 4).

includes importing the latest communications technologies, whilst attempting to control the information it transmits. Experiences in the West with, for example, transnational computer viruses, computer hackers and digitally-transmitted pornography provide an indication (and an analogy) for what the Chinese authorities will increasingly face. Moreover, it is often the young who can manipulate these machines whilst their elders may not even realise their potential. An informant's comment (itself borrowed from another cultural heritage) on the impact of the "Open Door" and the reform policies in general seems especially pertinent: "When you remove the cork from the bottle the genie flies out. One cannot put him back into the bottle again."

2.5.3 Cultural/Mediascapes

Because there is such a proliferation of messages from everywhere in the media, postmodern culture is characterized by a multiplicity of perspectives and voices. It is a thing of shreds and patches.

Ulf Hannerz (1992: 34)

There was abundant evidence of Shanghai's growing cultural re-internationalization. Most universities had some foreign students and one or more foreign teachers. Foreign-funded schools had been set up (for foreign children) and there were plans for an American university to establish a campus in Pudong.[65] An International Cultural Exchange Organization, the first of several which describe themselves as non-governmental, was set up in 1986. In November 1992, the Shanghai Star, the city's first post-1949 English-language newspaper began publication, at first weekly and since early 1994 twice weekly. In the theatre too there was a re-engagement with the outside world. For instance, I saw a stage version of the *Joy Luck Club* by the American Chinese writer Amy Tan - a co-production with an American theatre company.

Perry Link describes a "post-Mao rush to explore the outside" (1989: 29). Several informants recalled, for instance, the excitement with which they had queued to buy and devour each newly translated Western book in the early 1980s. Alongside and contributing to a general proliferation of popular media and a commercialization of culture since the death of Mao there has been a huge growth in the import of popular cultural items. These items include music, literature, television shows, films, advertisements and fashions. Diverse foreign books and magazines have been translated, although many controversial works were prohibited and available only to those with "connections". Also popular were books and articles by Chinese migrants which describe foreign countries and

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[65]"Schooling Aimed At Moneyed Classes" CD 18 May 1993: 3.

their life abroad. Imported music pervaded the now numerous discotheques and karaoke in Shanghai.[66] On my university campus the loudspeaker system, which would once have been devoted to political messages and exhortations, broadcast a daily lunchtime diet of music by Western bands such as *U2*, *Pink Floyd* and the *Beatles*. A favourite radio programme of many young people was a Sunday morning broadcast of popular music hosted by a disc jockey from Scotland.

Although many popular cultural imports were from the West it was **gangtai** (Hong Kong and Taiwan) popular culture which was especially pervasive. Until recently, all over China Shanghainese products were considered the most fashionable goods. This preeminence has largely been ceded to **gangtai** imports and "[f]ashions, hairstyles, consumer items, interior decorating, lifestyles, cuisine and even language increasingly began to emulate the south" (Barmé 1992: 13.23). This influx was affecting the Shanghai dialect, for instance, the Cantonese terms **da paidang** (street food stall), **da di** (call a taxi), *tso hiu hu* (**chao you yu**) (get the sack - literally "stir fried octopus"), and **xiaosa** (with style, carefree) were coming into common use. Each of these terms could be construed as having a synecdochal valency, for example, **da paidang** indicates the reemergence of small-scale private enterprise, **da di** the rise of a new moneyed class, *tso hiu hu* the end of job security and **xiaosa** the new importance of fashion and the rise of individualism and even hedonism.

Of all the various cultural phenomena, television beamed into the heart of people's homes, is perhaps the key channel of the cultural re-internationalization of Shanghai.[67] Television is a key medium in the "mediazation of modern culture" (Thompson 1990: 3) which enables individuals "to participate in a realm of social experience which is no longer restricted by the sharing of a common locale" (17-18). I consider that the rapid growth of televisual media in Shanghai and the re-internationalization of its images has had a profound effect upon residents' perceptions of their city and the world around them. In significant ways, electronic media and above all television, as the dominant cultural medium, re-sites and re-places individuals in new types of relationship to their own society.

Ulf Hannerz (1992: 223-4) raises the question whether global cultural flow leads

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[66]Few PRC musicians appealed to young people. The best known PRC rock musician Cui Jian appears to be more popular in the West than in China itself (see Chong 1991 on the themes addressed in Cui Jian's music).

[67]Lull has conducted research on television "audiences" in China (1988, 1990, 1991).

to global homogenization or to increasing cultural diversity and the building up of national identities. I suggest that the consequences of proliferating media images are highly ambiguous. They can contribute to and construct both national and Shanghainese identities, they can also contribute to the deconstruction or renegotiation of these identities as well as providing "raw material" for the construction of other forms of identities. It is to these overlapping and, at times, conflicting potentialities that I now turn.

Benedict Anderson (1983: 39-40) describes the act of reading newspapers as creating a certainty of the existence of an imagined community amongst its readers. Drawing upon this approach Hartley argues that television is "one of the prime sites upon which a given nation is constructed for its members" (1987: 124). Television penetration in Shanghai is almost complete, all the families I visited had at least one television. With the lack of alternative leisure pursuits, poor public transport and limited free time it was evident that Chinese television "diffuses its messages into the culture in a way that has no parallels" (Lull 1990: 145); the most common evening occupation of most of my informants was watching television at home.

There was ample evidence of Chinese television's role in constructing an imagined Chinese nation. For instance, there was frequent repetition by television presenters of such phrases as "the ancestral land" (**zuguo**) or "our China" (**women Zhongguo**). These may be regarded as a constant reaffirmation that the speaker and listeners belong to a single homogenous community of Chinese people, all are members of the Chinese nation, literally the "nation-family" (**guojia**). Media representations contribute to collective knowledges, creating "a cultural resource shared by millions" (Scannell 1988: 22). A programme such as the variety show broadcast from Beijing on *China Central Television Station* on Spring Festival eve attracts an audience of hundreds of millions. It is an important site - a contemporary ritual of sorts - which provides its viewers with "the temporal authentication of their existence as members of a synchronized national community" (Morley & Silverstone 1990: 42).[68] Both the content of the programme and, arguably of more importance, the shared belief that all over China others are watching this same programme and participating in this Chinese festival may be regarded as supporting the view of television's role in the construction of the imagined community of the "nation-family". The Chinese state actively engages in such a project; festive programmes have a lengthy build-up and each year attempts are made to make them more lavish and

[68]In 1986, 566 million people watched this show, 96% of the possible number of viewers (Li 1991: 342). Joe Cannon (1991) has a description of this programme.

spectacular.

John Thompson (1990: 16-7, 246-8) argues that for political leaders broadcast media have the potential for enormous opportunities and unprecedented risks. Skilful politicians who successfully master "the art of managing visibility" can exploit this by, for instance, fireside chats and local walkabouts whilst danger lies in emotional outbursts and impromptu remarks. As yet no Chinese political leader has tried to use "the artificial intimacy of the television or radio" (Jenner 1992: 184). Lucian Pye attributes Deng Xiaoping's limited use of television to the way that in China "omnipotence lies in the mystery which invisibility evokes" (1993: 415). The possibilities of "the most powerful technology yet invented for mobilizing popular opinion" were dramatically demonstrated by his brief public appearance at Spring Festival 1992, an "act which electrified the whole country" (Ibid: 414). In subsequent years his television appearance at Spring Festival become an annual ritual - in part, to assure citizens that he was still alive.[69] An important part of this contemporary iconographic ritual was the physical location of these "appearances". In the early 1990s, Deng chose Shanghai and Shenzhen, thereby endorsing the reform policies and focusing the national gaze upon events in these places.[70]

Other political leaders appeared more frequently but rarely in live broadcasts. Many were distinctly "media unfriendly" and their appearances could leave them open to ridicule. For instance, many Shanghai government officials spoke extremely poor **putonghua**. At least some informants took this as indicative of their lack of education (and hence unsuitability for their government roles). Another instance of this occurred during the live broadcast of the 1993 East Asian Games opening ceremony. A leading Shanghai official made a speech in which he inadvertently and without apparently noticing welcomed the "**guaibin** " (strange guests) instead of "**guibin** " (honoured guests)! I watched this programme with a large family group - many people had been given the day off and told to stay indoors - who all burst into laughter at this error.

Television images may re-orientate viewers' perceptions of their community in unexpected ways. In Britain recently I watched a documentary on Mao Zedong with a Chinese citizen. My friend had grown up in Shanghai surrounded by images of Mao but found it remarkable to see him moving. In China, portrayals of the Great Helmsman had always been static, an all-seeing, omnipresent icon. A moving Mao was not only

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[69]In 1995, Deng failed to appear, fostering speculation over his failing health.

[70]"Deng Says To 'Seize The Chance'" CD 25 January 1993: 1.

unfamiliar but reduced in stature, a human figure with human frailties.

During the 1989 student demonstrations television's role in constructing a national imagined community and the potential dangers in this for the Party were abundantly clear. Television images such as the film of hunger strikers on Tiananmen Square and the meeting between Li Peng and student representatives made a big impact upon Shanghainese and fuelled a sense of involvement in a national event. Furthermore, "mass communications allowed localities across China to pattern their protests closely on that of Beijing" (Unger 1991: 3). One may find evidence here for the media's role in constructing a national community. However, the plurality of communities which are "imagined" may be quite different from the one the state intends. In the months after June 4 there was a daily diet of programmes designed to convey the message that the demonstrations had been "counter-revolutionary turmoil". Some people I spoke with did accept this message, however, many did not.

It is particularly hard for the Chinese state to inculcate its message when many of the "audience" are sceptical or indifferent. Recent developments such as the proliferation of channels, satellite television and devices such as VCRs, which permit "time shifting" of programmes and the possibility to buy or rent materials, all tend to foster a more fragmented social world than that of traditional national broadcast television. Above all, in an increasingly competitive cultural market place with many alternative and divergent images, it is difficult for the state to "sell" its message. State propaganda officials face an uphill task; they are pulled by commercial logic to produce, for instance, comic routines which stick to the "official line" and are funny. It is to an exploration of these recent developments that I now turn.

An especially ambiguous aspect of electronic media is its ability to "transgress national boundaries" (Hartley 1987: 124). In Europe, Hartley argues that this occurs in three main ways: the broadcast of programmes such as the Olympics and "aid shows"; transnational ownership and control of production and distribution; international sales of programmes. In Shanghai the broadcasting of "global events" had certainly begun to transgress China's national boundaries. However, as consideration of Hartley's example of the Olympics suggests the impact of this is ambiguous. Such events may well bolster the national imagined community; the Chinese government places great stress upon sports events and the achievement of national success in them. Conversely, events such as the July 1985 Live Aid concert which was screened to one billion viewers in 150 countries including China may appeal to "the ability to feel affinities across national, ethnic and

cultural divisions, to imagine a community beyond the boundaries of the known" (Hebdige 1988: 219, also 216-22).

Political controls still prevent transnational ownership within China. However, there is considerable screening of foreign-made programmes. A young businesswoman described the introduction of such programmes as a clear indication of the success of the **kaifang** policy.[71] Stuart Hall (1991) describes global mass culture as "dominated by the image which crosses and recrosses linguistic frontiers" (27). Where Cultural Revolution China had a limited range of images the reform era has ushered in a vast increase in the range, availability and divergence of images. Several informants told me that when images of the West were first shown in Shanghai in the early 1980s they had been surprised by China's low standard of living in comparison to Western countries - a finding which supports Chan's statement that when foreign films and programmes began to be shown again in China "most Chinese people were dismayed by the glaring disparities in living standards" (1994: 98). For years they had been told that they were much better off than workers in the capitalist West. A party member told me that "it came as a shock when we suddenly saw that the West was far more advanced (**xianjin**) than we had ever imagined." People noted discrepancies between the style, genre and content of foreign and the Chinese media. Images of the West which were clearly at odds with official pronouncements contributed to an undermining of the Party's credibility at the same time as providing alternative images of how things were or could be. A middle school teacher told me that students had demonstrated in 1989 because of changes brought about by **gaige kaifang**. Above all, she believed, "before the reforms people heard nothing (**tingbujian**) and saw nothing (**kanbujian**) about the outside world (**waimian**). Now they could compare with the rest of the world and see China's true state."

The extent to which foreign ideas and genres now influence Chinese programmes is also extremely significant. The influential and controversial **Heshang** series was an obvious instance of this. The series format drew heavily upon Western television documentary styles. In addition, the script referred to an extensive range of Western ideas which could formerly not have been voiced - Marx, of course, had been an exception - and used them to analyze China's current situation. Su Xiaokang, a co-producer of **Heshang**, points out that some of the key theorists referred to in the series are Marx, Hegel, Toynbee, Joseph Needham, H.G. Wells and Francis Bacon (1991: 292-3).

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[71]According to Li (1991: 345), China *Central Television Station* first used a live satellite broadcast for the 1978 football World Cup. From April 1980, CCTV began to receive daily foreign news by satellite.

More generally, global communications systems "lay an abstract space over and across territorial configurations" which renders the very idea of boundary, such as the frontier of the nation state problematical (Morley & Robins 1989: 23). In Shanghai, for instance, the number of television satellite dishes was increasing. These enabled viewers to watch, for example, broadcasts of *Star Television* from Hong Kong. Satellite television was common in expensive hotels. I also saw one in a Taiwanese-owned company, a newspaper office and a private home, even though it was supposedly illegal for the latter to install satellite dishes. Satellite television was subject to other indirect restrictions. For instance, *Star Television* has sought to safeguard its access to the PRC market by reducing the sex and violence content of its broadcasts and reducing news coverage. These moves included *Star* dropping *BBC World Television* from its broadcasts following the Chinese government's criticism of BBC programmes deemed critical of the regime. In a recent television documentary an executive of *Star* commented wryly that in China "no news is good news".[72]

The demonstrations of May-June 1989 provided ample evidence of the way in which television "enables individuals to experience events which take place in locales that are spatially and temporally remote, and this experience may in turn inform or stimulate forms of action or response on the part of recipients" (Thompson 1990: 17). James Watson suggests that foreign networks' satellite broadcasts made an international media event out of "small-scale demonstrations" in 1989 and that this created a very serious political crisis (1992: 68). Although this may neglect the efficiency of informal networks in conveying information it is undoubtedly the case that "[t]he media loop between China and the West was unprecedented" (Wark 1993: 140). The demonstrators were often aware that their political drama had a global audience and at times played their role accordingly.[73] The style of the demonstrations was clearly affected by foreign symbols - Shanghai students had their own "Goddess of Liberty", wore headbands with slogans on them and banners often had slogans in English (see Watson 1992: 79-80 and Wark 1993 for Beijing examples). This was clearly an attempt to appeal to an international television audience. Theorists such as Joshua Meyrowitz would take this as evidence that electronic media have "homogenized places and experiences" (1985: viii). The replication of the

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[72]"The Whole World in His Hands: A Speculative Report on the Future of Rupert Murdoch" broadcast on BBC 2, 20 February 1995.

[73]As Wark points out this "global positive feedback loop" also included the CCPs close scrutiny of broadcasts shown in the West during its collection of evidence in the post-June 4 round-up of participants (1993: 140).

same images and products in different places may give this appearance, but I would argue that the way they are appropriated, understood, and the effects they have may vary enormously. For instance, I suspect that students calling for "democracy" during demonstrations in 1989 did not wish to enfranchise China's rural population . As Cohen points out, to take the apparent homogeneity of imported symbols at face value ignores "the indigenous creativity with which communities work on externally imposed change" (1985: 37).

If television images are ambiguous for Chinese identities, then what of Shanghainese identities? Is there any evidence of a strengthening of local identities, the "recreation, the reconstruction of imaginary, knowable places in the face of the global post-modern" (Hall 1991: 35)? Presenters on *Shanghai Television Station* and the recently set up *Oriental Television Station* frequently spoke of "**women Shanghai**" - "our Shanghai". This constant reference can be regarded as a means of both creating and/or reinforcing a sense (or senses) of being Shanghainese.

With the increasing mediazation of Shanghai the local dialect had begun to achieve rather more prominence. This was especially apparent with the post-1991 proliferation of radio phone-ins and live television programmes. These programmes were predominantly devoted to consumer issues and local (non-professional) participants frequently used the dialect. Such developments seem to bear out William Jenner's prediction that with a fragmentation of "imperial absolutism" there will be greater cultural and local linguistic autonomy within China (1992: 235-6). It may also be, as Jenner suggests, that this presages the strengthening of local identities and loyalties.

During 1992-4 popular imported television programmes included an American comedy serial *Growing Pains*, a British comedy serial *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* and weekly screening of a British football match. In popular representations "foreigner" (**waiguoren**) was a term used primarily to describe European, American or Australasian Caucasians. Television programmes and advertisements often included a foreigner. There seemed to be a conflation and concordance of the terms "foreign" (**waiguo**), "West" (**xifang**) and "modern" (**xiandai**).[74] The presence of foreigners seemed to be metonymical for modernity. An informant also suggested that the Chinese authorities show foreigners on Chinese television to demonstrate that China has foreign friends and international prestige (**guoji weixin**).

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[74]This is clearly not a new phenomenon. Bergère writes that in early twentieth century Shanghai "[m]odernism was equated with Westernism" (1989: 48).

As with other cultural products **gangtai** influence was especially pervasive, with many imported serials and advertisements. Locally made television programmes increasingly copied **gangtai** formula. **Gangtai** popular culture "provides a model of a modern Chinese life-style and a new language that breaks the hegemonic lock of Communist Newspeak" (Gold 1993a: 925).

Some Chinese economists use the term "greater Chinese economic circle" (**da Zhonghua jingji quan**), including the People's Republic, Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong. In the media, overseas Chinese (**huaqiao** and **huayi**) were generally represented as "insiders" (**nei**) but to an extent straddle the "inside/outside" (**nei-wai**) divide. During the reform period the Chinese state has made a particular effort to reconstruct relationships between mainland and overseas Chinese in an attempt to attract investment. Investment by overseas Chinese has been crucial to construction throughout the coastal region of China. From an ideological standpoint the involvement of overseas Chinese is less problematic than that of "foreigners"; the state has a vested interest in stressing their "Chineseness".

The Chinese media often applauded the positive role of overseas Chinese in China's current reconstruction. On the evening of the Mid-Autumn Festival a special *China Central Television Station* programme was broadcast which had an audience of hundreds of millions. The presenters made frequent reference to Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong "friends". Acts were included from these places and the presenters stressed that "we are all children of the dragon" (**women dou shi long de erzi**); a description which emphasises common ancestry and hints at China's desire to emulate the economic success of the "Four Little Dragons" - South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. It was notable that Shanghai's recently set up *Oriental Television Station* had a separate section on its news devoted to events in Hong Kong.

Tom Gold argues that the largely one-way flows of cultural imports from "peripheral China" are "redefining the essence of what it means to be a "modern" Chinese" (1993a: 907). In the case of Shanghai I agree with this to an extent but with certain reservations. Firstly, I would add that it also contributes to notions of being a "modern" Shanghainese. I gained the strong impression that Shanghai citizens often felt a closer cultural affinity to Chinese compatriots in Hong Kong or New York than rural mainlanders. When talking about Shanghai, for instance, they often compared it to these two cities and never to cities such as Bombay or Jakarta which an outside observer may consider more apposite. Secondly, there is a sense in which this is a "recreation of a

global Chinese culture" which was disrupted in 1949 (Harding 1993b: 673). Watson (1992) also argues that this is a new sense of cultural identity which has been created by such phenomena as global media. However, it is clear that from the last century treaty port cities such as Shanghai, Canton and Hong Kong "shared analogous and specific cultures and economies" and had more in common with other overseas Chinese communities than rural inland provinces (Bergère 1989: 28, 43). I suggest that the re-internationalization of Shanghai has reactivated these ties and that electronic media actively facilitate this process. As Gold points out, since it was Shanghai refugees who pioneered the Taiwan and Hong Kong entertainment industries, "[o]ne could argue that the spread of Gangtai popular culture on the mainland now represents a return of Shanghai culture" (1993a: 909 note 6).

A third reservation is to suggest that the influence of **gangtai** culture can be exaggerated. Unlike other major growth centres in China, such as Guangdong, Shanghai has a wide spread of foreign trading partners and sources of foreign investment (Jacobs & Hong 1994: 244-6). In the same way as Shanghai is not tied economically to any single region, so I found that its residents would "pick and mix" from the desirable aspects of many different places. I often heard rather condescending views expressed towards such "upstarts" as Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. In addition, the notion that overseas Chinese are "insiders" (**nei**) was far from universal. I often heard people complain that land in Shanghai was being "sold/rented to foreigners" (**mai/zugei waiguoren**).[75] In many cases this land was being rented to overseas Chinese from Taiwan or Hong Kong. I noted above the appeal of New York, this was not solely for the Chinese diaspora there but a more general attraction to New York as an appropriate metropolitan model. During 1993, an extremely popular television series was "Beijinger in New York",[76] the first full-length Chinese-made television drama filmed on location in the West. Although featuring Beijingers, the New York setting may have had a special resonance in Shanghai, where residents sometimes described their city as similar to New York, considering both cities of immigrants. The development of such programmes also indicates the way in which cultural boundaries in coastal cities such as Shanghai increasingly "crisscross each other to form interlocking networks in which there is no

[75]It is interesting to speculate how ordinary people perceived overseas Chinese during the Maoist period when political pressure made them outsiders.

[76]This twenty episode series was based on the book of the same name, **Beijingren Zai Niuyue** (Glen Cao 1993). The author migrated to the US in 1981.

single center" (Lee 1991: 225).

Having explored the contribution of mediascapes to the sustenance, creation, redefinition and/or deconstruction of an "imagined community" of Chinese and/or of Shanghainese, it is important to demonstrate ways in which mediascapes enable many other potentialities. It seems necessary to inject a greater degree of complexity to the notion of a single monolithic entity which Anderson's notion of an imagined community seems to posit. Self identification with various, potentially mutually antagonistic, imagined communities is possible. These identities can be conceptualized as akin to transparencies of varying density, hue and content layered one upon the other. I am drawn to the work of Arjun Appadurai (1991) who focuses upon the importance of the imaginary in "imagined communities". It seems a reasonable assumption that "the imagination has now acquired a singular new part in social life", above all, as a result of mass media images "which present a rich, ever-changing store of possible lives" (Appadurai 1991: 197). In image rich Shanghai "ordinary lives today are increasingly powered not only by the givenness of things but by the possibilities that the media (either directly or indirectly) suggest are available" (200).

The proliferation of media addressed to different audiences at different times and places provides the potential for diverse imagined communities. Alongside membership of an imagined community of Chinese people and/or Shanghainese, the same participant could also be part of an imagined community, for example, of film fans (the live Oscars), international football fans (watching British football matches) or old people (reading Shanghai Old People's Newspaper - **Shanghai Lao Nian Bao**). Shanghai radio had hourly updates of share prices on the Shanghai exchange and the major markets around the world. This could be regarded as contributing to the construction of a community of Shanghainese share dealers and/or members of a global share market.

In early 1990s Shanghai the "images, ideas, and opportunities that have come from elsewhere" (Appadurai 1991: 199) included those provided via the reintroduction and rapid growth of increasingly sophisticated advertising. This played an important role in fostering aspirational identities. Many television programmes, especially at peak times, were framed and interspersed by advertisements for imported products such as *Marlborough* cigarettes, *Hitachi* video recorders, *Colgate* toothpaste and *Omo* washing powder - the latter a direct translation of a British advert from the 1960s. In some cases the rights to screen highly popular and therefore expensive (usually American) films and series were sold cheaply to Shanghai television stations on the condition that adjacent

advertising slots were filled by advertisements of their choosing. As advertisers begin to target specific audiences this provides material for the construction of imagined communities of consumer identities - for instance, of *Nike* wearers or *Marlborough* smokers - and reinforces differences between groups.

To posit the potentiality for diverse imagined communities does not, of course, tell us the extent to which an individual "buys into" any particular community or communities - we cannot simply *read* this from the content. For instance, although the front page of **Xinmin Wanbao** generally replicated that of the main national papers, many people told me that they "never read the front page". Additionally, like Andrew Nathan, I found many "decipherers and skeptics" who when viewing Chinese media "often reached conclusions opposite from those intended for them" (1986: 180).[77] Belonging is multifaceted and subject to flux. Electronic media's role in forming, sustaining and recreating identities is complex. As Peter Dahlgren found with television news, even this single mode of broadcasting "facilitates a plurality of subjectivities which can become mobilized in different settings" (297-8). Taking television viewing as an analogy for identity, sometimes one is thoroughly captivated by a single programme, at other times one is torn between different channels, a remote control can be used to zap from channel to channel, one's attention may drift on and off a programme, people may talk over or engage in some other activity whilst it is on. The latter was very much the case when I watched the *Spring Festival Variety Programme* with a Shanghainese family. It was evident that the family being together inside their flat sharing a meal was the important core of this ritual.

Often the appeal of **gangtai** culture was its stress upon individual emotion, fun and relaxation (Gold 1993a: 913-4). In this way "it helps to carve out a private sphere" and "institutionalizes the zone of indifference" (924). For instance, when I asked informants about the appeal of karaoke I was invariably told that it gave people an opportunity to **fahui** - to give full rein to their feelings. Shanghai's numerous bars and discos are important sites for re-creation. With the more luxuriant replicating exotic locations elsewhere (ancient Egypt at one) they are fine examples of "the unyoking of imagination from place" (Appadurai 1991: 202).

China's largest disco, JJ's, opened on Shanghai's Yanan Road in 1992. JJ's has

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[77] I am not arguing that this diminishes the notion of the imagined community. People may violently disagree with official statements because they are incompatible with their own conception of the relevant imagined community.

room for 1,000 people - in Asia only a disco in Tokyo is larger - and was set up by an American overseas Chinese. The lasers, stroboscopes, video displays, music and disc jockeys were all imported. One fan commented that JJ's was an example of something good which had come out of the **kaifang** policy, adding that previously in Shanghai the only modern discos were in tourist hotels which required FEC for the entrance fee. By contrast, JJ's was open to "ordinary Shanghai people" because one could also pay in *Renminbi.* However, the entrance fee (27 FEC or 32 RMB) made it the domain of the relatively affluent such as joint venture employees or business people. Moreover, like many other cultural imports its appeal was almost exclusively to the young. These new cultural phenomena (fashion was another) served to create and contribute to a growing cultural divide between young and old - the authorities being firmly in the latter camp. Visits by popular singers from Taiwan and Hong Kong also attracted the relatively affluent young. A new word - **fashaoyou** (literally "fevered friends") - had been introduced from Hong Kong to describe the behaviour of fervent fans. Fans paid touts up to 400¥ for tickets originally priced at 100¥, behaviour which provoked incomprehension among older generations. By contrast, at performances of Shanghai opera (**huju**) - where audiences tended to be elderly - tickets priced at 10¥ could often be bought for just 2¥.

Significantly, the term **daigou** - "generation gap" - is a direct translation from English. It was clear to me that a new youth culture was emerging and this supports evidence of value change among post-Mao youth that Stanley Rosen (1989) found in survey data. Dick Hebdige (1988) argues that for British working class youth in the 1950s and 1960s American and Italian products provided a space in which oppositional meanings to the dominant traditions of British culture could be negotiated and expressed. For these young people American popular culture "offer[ed] a rich iconography, a set of symbols, objects and artefacts which [could] be assembled and re-assembled by different groups in a literally limitless number of combinations" (Ibid: 74). Similarly, the emergent youth culture of contemporary Shanghai youngsters appropriated commodities especially from America and Hong Kong "to mark out aspirational differences in the social domain through the invocation of an exotic elsewhere" (Ibid: 9).

It would, however, be overly simplistic to consider venues such as JJ's and karaoke bars as indicating solely a generational cultural divide. Many people considered these locations as sites of prostitution. High Party officials were widely believed to make money from such entertainment centres. An article in Shanghai's mass circulation

Xinmin Wanbao hinted at the existence of high level backing for karaoke bars where sexual services and extortion took place.[78] The absence of follow-up articles suggests that it touched a raw nerve.

2.5.4 Spatial Mobility/Sociological Differentiation

Much more could be said on the impact of Shanghai's re-internationalization and the intersection of spatial mobility and sociological differentiation. Before concluding this chapter it may be helpful to provide a few instances of this.

Joint venture and foreign owned companies offered new employment opportunities to (mainly) young, well educated Shanghainese residents. The economic and social position of employees in these companies was generally quite different to those for employees within state **danwei**. For example, foreign funded ventures did not usually provide housing for employees, nor did they have official Communist party structures within them. The need to mediate between foreigners and Chinese has allowed for a revival of the old role of comprador. A businesswoman in a trading joint venture company described her role to me as a **maiban** - a comprador. Although this term was not generally used, this occupation is returning to Shanghai in practice if not in name.

Often considerable status was attached to those who have studied abroad. To have been a "student abroad" (**liuxuesheng**) is an identification one keeps for life. An academic told me that students considered it "glorious" (**guangcai**) to obtain the gilding of having studied abroad (**chuguo dujin** - literally "the gold plating which comes from having been abroad." A dictionary definition says of **dujin** "get gilded - formerly said of students who went abroad to study in order to enhance their social status" CED 1988: 167). He added that a PhD gained abroad - a **yang boshi** - is considered more valuable (**zhiqian**) than a Chinese PhD - **tu boshi**. This is the re-creation of a social strata familiar in pre-1949 China and which was immortalized in Qian Zhongshu's (1947) satirical novel Fortress Besieged which depicts the life of Chinese students who studied abroad in the 1930s.[79]

So many people have gone abroad that a term has been coined to describe "left behind women" (**liushou nushi**). In 1991, a play performed in Shanghai used this expression as its title "**Liushou Nushi**". Those who have worked abroad and returned to

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[78]"**Ye Chuan KTV**" (Nighttime Visit to KTV) XMWB 9 July 1993: 13.

[79]In 1916 Mary Gamewell described how "[y]oung men back from years of study in America or Europe, and there are many of them in Shanghai, wear foreign clothes and look well in them" (160).

Shanghai formed a part of the *nouveaux riches* in Shanghai. A local stereotype was that they can place the savings of two or three years work in Japan in the bank and live off the interest (**chi lixi** - literally "eat the interest"). A fictional account Shanghai's New Aristocrats focuses upon characters of this type.[80]

Overseas tourism was a possibility for Shanghai's newly rich and official delegations also had greater opportunities to go abroad. In London, for instance, I recently met a party of share dealers from Shanghai. A popular view was that such "perks" were one of the ways in which the "open door" provided new scope for corruption and official largesse.

Some Shanghainese sought to acquire a foreign passport. A young businesswoman I met hoped to become an overseas Chinese in this way, although it was not her intention to live abroad. She explained that a foreign passport would improve her status (**shenfen**) within China. For example, it would entitle her to buy soft sleeper train tickets - these were officially reserved for those with the rank of section chief (**chuzhang**) or above and foreigners. It would also allow her greater freedom (**ziyou**) to come and go from China and within China - tax evasion was also a part of this freedom.

These instances provide an indication of some of the further consequences of Shanghai's re-internationalization for social differentiation within the city. Brief as they are, they highlight the new realms and layers of complexity which Shanghai's reintegration into the global economy has already begun to produce in the daily lives of its citizens.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I hope to have given an ethnographic portrayal of the increasing porosity of Shanghai's boundaries both to global and intra-national flows. The consequences of the shifts away from the pre-1980s model of autarchy, cellular, honeycomb and limited horizontal linkages for identities in Shanghai are extremely ambiguous. There is evidence to support those who anticipate "forces within modernization that sustain and even encourage ethnicity's growth" (Burgess 1978: 278-9). However, there are also countervailing tendencies which fracture and deterritorialize identities. I have demonstrated ways in which these horizontal integrations have helped to sustain, redefine and/or deconstruct imagined Chinese and Shanghainese identities. Additionally, I have shown that identities in Shanghai are multiple and context-influenced.

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[80] Shanghai Xin Guizu Fan Xiangda (1992).

In the case of senses of "being Shanghainese" I have shown that there is considerable vitality to such identifications. The decentralization of economic and political powers, central government expropriations and, above all, the influx of rural migrants all provide the potential for distinctive and assertive Shanghainese identities to develop. Although this could provide the basis for a more overtly political assertion of regional "voices" I found little evidence of this.

I have demonstrated the extent to which Shanghai citizens engage in "orientalizing". The delineation of various regional stereotypes expressed by Shanghai residents provided a "mirror" for self definitions of "being Shanghainese". My findings clearly demonstrate that regional identities contribute to "different meanings of being Chinese" (Siu 1993: 19). The senses of "being Shanghainese" are an example of the way local experience mediates national identity (Cohen 1982b: 13). However, I also gained an overwhelming sense that Shanghainese identities were not oppositional to concurrent identification as "Chinese". Indeed, an indispensable component of "being Shanghainese" was to "be Chinese". On this part of the China coast, and I suspect elsewhere in China, "multiple identities exist which are mutually reinforcing" (White & Cheng 1993: 190). To adapt a vogue phrase, "being Shanghainese" is being Chinese with Shanghai characteristics. In the following chapter I disaggregate identities further by investigating the different types of representations which were made of those who live in different parts of Shanghai.

Even in Guangdong, which "has the potential to break away", Helen Siu found "a definite commitment towards the larger polity" (1993: 21). My findings endorse Jacobs and Hong's assessment that "[f]ield research in Shanghai does not suggest Shanghai people wish to separate from China. Rather, they wish Beijing would show more concern for Shanghai's problems" (1994: 248). Thus people in Shanghai may demand better treatment from the central government but as residents *of* Shanghai and not *as* Shanghainese.

There are also "horizontalizing" trends which are reducing Shanghai's distinctiveness within China. In the reform era, Shanghai is less obviously at the vanguard in comparisons of wealth and "modernity"; until 1992, at least, many saw it as having been overtaken by Shenzhen and Canton. Additionally, greater freedom of movement within China has reintegrated Shanghai into flows of tourists, relatives, business people and other transients. The growth of national media and communications networks has also

fostered Shanghai's key national role.

During the Maoist era China's international frontiers were relatively tightly sealed, flows of information, people and products both into and out of the country were limited and strictly regulated. There was little to challenge views of what "China" and "being Chinese" was or should be. Shanghai's increasing re-integration into global cultural flows has had far reaching consequences. In some respects this is simply a return to the pre-1949 situation in which Shanghai was closely linked with other commercial entrepôts and the Chinese diaspora. There are, however, at least two distinct differences. Firstly, in the 1990s, Shanghai is no longer a highly productive cultural centre but, rather, is dominated by cultural imports, many from the Chinese diaspora in Hong Kong and Taiwan. There is an increasing "compradorization" of the Chinese avant-garde, for instance, in the form of contracts between Hong Kong and Taiwan music producers and PRC film makers and musicians (Barmé 1992: 13.29). However, it remains to be seen whether Shanghai will re-emerge "as a great centre of print and electronic culture for the Chinese world" (Jenner 1992: 236). There is much to support Tu Wei-ming's view that "the periphery will come to set the economic and cultural agenda for the center, thereby undermining its political effectiveness" (1991: 12). Secondly, new technologies enable a far more rapid and extensive influx of communications and images, although the degree of access to them produces new forms of differentiation.

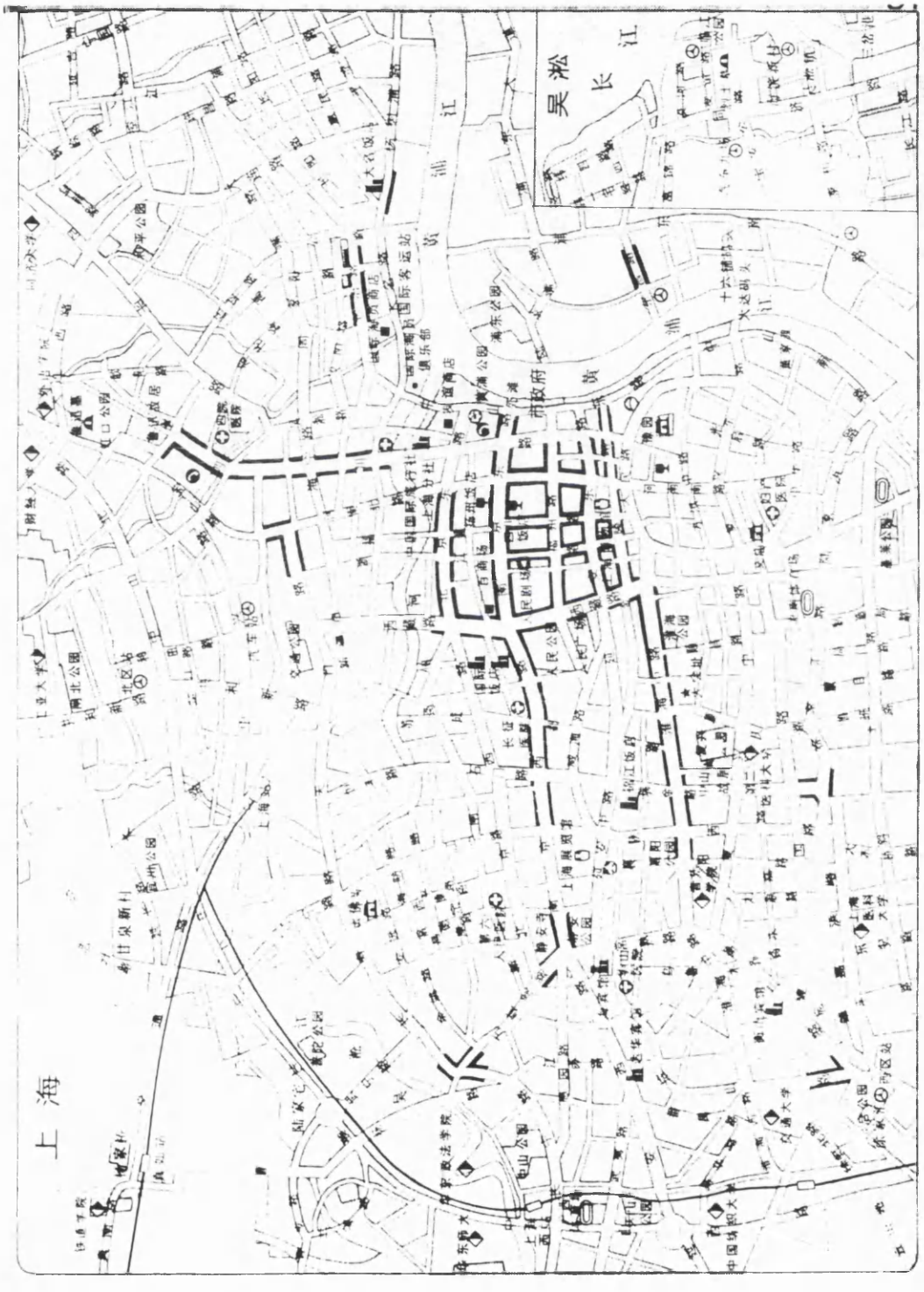
Undoubtedly "media-derived meanings can contribute to a sense of belonging and community" (Dahlgren 1988: 288). Skilful politicians may, for instance, seek to bolster the sense of shared national feeling through television programming. However, in place of a "captive audience" government propagandists must now vie in the cultural market place. The Open Door has contributed to the "undermining of the Party's totalistic control and the rise of more autonomous social life and public opinion" (Whyte 1993c: 533). In fracturing the monologic state discourse, transnational cultural flows provide the material for diverse non-territorial identities. Ulf Hannerz writes of the way the "media gives us more contemporaries" (1992: 30). For urban Shanghainese their contemporaries tended not to be the rural migrants on their doorstep (at times literally so) but images of successful migrants (or their descendants) in the Chinese diaspora and other "modern" metropolitans. These models provided positive images of what Shanghai can (and many say ought to) be, whilst the influx of indigenous non-Shanghainese migrants heightened senses of what Shanghai should not be. The irony is that it is largely these stigmatized migrants who are building the "new" Shanghai; a city whose "modernity" and

"internationality" bolsters senses of Shanghaineseness which excludes those who have made it possible.

Global mediascapes facilitated by new technologies and allied with China's burgeoning media provided residents with diverse "landscapes of images" (Appadurai 1990: 9) and a far greater range of imaginary others. As Tom Gold suggests "Gangtai popular culture...provides a model of a modern Chinese life-style and a new language that breaks the hegemonic lock of Communist Newspeak" (1993a: 925). Tu Wei-ming (1991) stresses the "transformative potential" of the **gangtai** periphery. Whilst acknowledging the "destructive power of the center" (15) Tu sees the potential for the periphery to participate in "creatively constructing a new vision of Chineseness" (28). Amongst Shanghainese residents, who stressed the openness and outward-looking characteristics of "being Shanghainese", I found much evidence to suggest a willingness to embrace cultural products from elsewhere. However, I conceive of these flows as also having more diffuse, diversifying effects. With the proliferation of trans-national mediascapes there is ample evidence of the global trend for "culture" to become less a matter of habitus than "an arena for conscious choice, justification and representation" (Appadurai 1990: 18). Global cultural flow and rising prosperity provides an increasing repertoire of possible identities and communities to belong to. These include a range of "aspirational identities", such as consumer and youth sub-cultures.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that "Chinese culture has never been a static structure but a dynamic, constantly changing landscape" (Tu 1991: 4). Those who perceive a "problem" of Chinese cultural identity seem to ignore their own observations that the Chinese cultural system has always allowed for "the free expression of what outsiders may perceive to be chaotic local diversity" (Watson 1992: 74). Shanghai citizens are learning to live with the juxtapositions which characterize the post-modern world. Those who predict the deconstruction of China, or the demise of the Communist Party for that matter, underestimate the ability of people to adopt and adapt. What are conflicting identities from an outside analyst's viewpoint are often non-discursive, not reflected upon in people's daily lives.

Map 4. Contemporary Shanghai (Chinese map)
Source - **Zui Xin Zhongguo Jiaotong Luyou Tuce** (Latest China Transport and Travel Maps). Wuhan: Dizhi Chubanshe. 1993



Chapter 3 The Walls Within: Shanghai Inside Out

The previous chapter dealt primarily with the view looking outwards from Shanghai. It examined various representations of those who consider themselves "Shanghainese" and of people and places considered as "other", as non-Shanghainese. In this chapter the focus moves from flows from outside the city (**chengwai**) to representations of places and people within the city (**chengli**). I propose to treat Shanghai not as a single city but rather as a cityscape which provides a diversity of potential environments.

Each visitor and resident will have their own mental map of Shanghai, a map based upon memories, gossip, and experiences which is both contingent and subject to redrawing. My intention is to pore over some indigenous charts of Shanghai as they were represented to me by citizens of the city. Cartographers draw maps of different scales, using differing formulae and colours to mark points of interest and importance. Each will also differ according to the skill of the artist and his or her perception of the audience for his or her work. Some are densely covered with clear, sharply defined features, others more opaque, giving only the vaguest outline of what may be found there. This chapter provides an excursion around various locations - physical and social boundaries - which were described by informants. Of particular interest are ways in which linkages were made between place and identity. Special attention is also paid to changing features of the work unit and home "styles", and changing modes of transcending space.

During a long, free-wheeling conversation with a young working couple, the wife described her life and that of her husband to me as consisting of "two points and a line" (**liang dian yi xian**). They explained that this description (which I have also seen in local newspapers) conveys the simplicity, regularity and monotony of the lives of the vast majority of Shanghai's working population (**shangban de**). Their lives, their time and energy, were spent at home, the work place or commuting between these two places. With a six day working week still common,[1] and many people commuting up to three or four hours per day there was little room for alternative activities. My investigation builds upon this indigenous model and investigates ways in which its content was changing and new alternatives, including new types of "line", emerging.

Each of the two points, the home and the work place, are taken as "enclosures". Within Shanghai there was considerable evidence that both physical and social walls are

[1] In 1994, a five-day working week was adopted nationally.

being breached. One informant commented that "before **gaige kaifang** Shanghai was stuck in a frame (**kuangjia kazhu**), now it has been loosened up (**songbing**)." I highlight a trend for work places to become less enclosed and encompassing and for homes to become more enclosed and bounded. I commence, however, by outlining ways in which the city environment has begun to alter since the mid-1980s. I then examine a significant way in which places within Shanghai and their residents were differentially marked and assigned to an "upper" or "lower" status.

3.1 The Changing City Environment

Barry Naughton stresses the way "[t]he lives of urban dwellers are shaped by the cities in which they live, and cities themselves are shaped by economic forces that extend well beyond urban boundaries" (1995b: 61). Naughton describes how for some fifteen years pre-reform China had "followed an explicitly antiurban approach" in which cities economic resources were exploited (67, 67-70). A direct consequence of this was a [s]tagnation of the physical form of the core cities (70)." Shanghai citizens often complained about the lack of improvement in the city's infrastructure and physical appearance during the Maoist era and until (at least) the mid-1980s. Many informants cited this stagnation as indicative of a more general lack of change. A standing joke in the city is that when those who left Shanghai in the late 1940s return, they can easily find their way around because everything is exactly the same. A typical comment was that after thirty years of Communist Party rule the best architecture in the city was still that built by foreigners and the tallest building still the 24-floor Park Hotel built in 1934. A young businessman remarked that "from 1949 onwards, until the building of the Hilton hotel in the 1980s there was no change in Shanghai's appearance (**mianmao**)."

Since the latter 1980s new construction began to radically alter the cityscape of Shanghai. When I asked Shanghai residents about "change" in recent years many noted changes in the physical environment. Residents mentioned in particular the many new high-rise luxury hotels, roads being built and old ones renewed, construction of an underground line, and the large-scale development project in Pudong - which one informant described as Shanghai's "shop window".[2] A resident in her forties remarked that this construction work gave one a "feeling of newness" (**xin de ganjue**).

The building of the luxury high rise Hilton hotel in the early to mid-1980s was

[2]Another important change is the way Shanghai is becoming physically bigger, "more unruly" and sprawling (Naughton 1995b: 86).

widely viewed as the first sign of progress - a literal and a metonymical landmark. Although many informants viewed such buildings as indicative of Shanghai's increasing prosperity others were less impressed. For example, a retired man told me that the existence of such places was of supreme indifference to him since people such as himself could never hope to stay there. Similarly, a young office worker complained that whilst numerous large, expensive hotels were being built many citizens still lived in sub-standard accommodation.

After years of neglect, there are also many projects to improve the city's housing and infrastructure. According to the BBC2 documentary "Cities of the Future", in 1995 Shanghai had 20,000 construction sites.[3] In central Shanghai residential housing is being demolished to make way for roads and redevelopment, including land leased to foreign companies. Key road building projects include completion of the city ring road (Zhongshan Road). Informants expected such projects to bring improvements but at present they create even greater congestion. Often this inconvenience was described as the price Shanghai must bear to repay the debt (**huanzhai**) of no construction in the past. People expressed resentment that this debt had built up because Shanghai had contributed so much money to Beijing.[4]

The commercialization of the economy has begun to alter the cityscape directly. Advertisements proliferate and ever more neon signs light the main commercial areas. Walking along Nanjing Road opposite the Peace Hotel with a local businessman in his late thirties I commented to him on the profusion of bright lights. Concurring he added, with great approval, "Shanghai is returning to how it was in the 1930s." He paused before continuing, "now China is the Communist Party's, and they have to make Nanjing Road brighter and the life of the **laobaixing** (common people) better than it was then, or it will be seen as a failure." He was clearly full of optimism. Unfortunately I had no chance to ask him if returning to how things were sixty years ago could be construed as the measure of success.

3.2 Uptown, Downtown Shanghai

Within Shanghai, local residents drew a distinction between the **shangzhijiao** (*zang*

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[3]Broadcast 29 November 1995. I suspect that this figure of 20,000 may be an exaggeration. During 1993, various informants quoted a figure of 5,000.

[4]People spoke of money being given to Beijing or zhongyang - the Central Committee of the Party or, more loosely, the central authorities. The terms appeared to be interchangeable.

tsa ko) - "upper corner" - and the **xiazhijiao** (*o tsa ko*) - "lower corner". The Chinese terms **shang** (upper, higher) and **xia** (low, under) are used in much the same ways as these socio-spatial metaphors are in English (see Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 14-21). Thus **shang** includes notions of political superiority as in **shangji** - higher authorities - and being morally or qualitatively superior as in **shangdeng** - high, superior quality. By contrast, **xia** includes things both physically and morally base as in **xialiu** - low-down, obscene.

Although, as one informant remarked, it is not possible to draw a precise line (**juti de jiexian**) on the map of Shanghai (see Maps 4 and 5) to divide **shang** and **xia**, amongst people I encountered I found a broad consensus on how different parts of the city should be assigned. The **shangzhijiao** included especially Jingan, the northern part of Xuhui, Luwan, Huangpu - especially the northern part, Nanjing West Road, Beijing West Road, Huaihai Road, and Yanan West Road. The **xiazhijiao** included especially Zhabei, also Putao, Yangpu (especially in the south west), the southern most part of Xujia Hui, Chongning and parts of Hongkou, Luwan south of Jianguo Road (especially Dapujiao Road).

Several informants noted that within **shang** areas there are **xia** parts and vice versa. For instance, whilst Yangpu overall is **xia** it also has places such as Fudan and Tongji Universities which are **shang**. Hongkou was generally regarded as neutral - as possessing both **shang** and **xia**. Most divergence from this "map" of Shanghai involved the "border" areas between **shang** and **xia**. One of the few sites over which there were contesting views was Nanshi - the district containing the old city. Some placed it firmly in the **xiazhijiao**, others considered it neither **shang** nor **xia**. One suggestion was that "Nanshi used to be **xia** but is now middling (**zhongdeng**)." To describe it as **xia** accords with an imperial discourse which found numerous contrasts between the "model settlement" and the "Chinese native city" - the former invariably positive and latter negative.[5] I speculate below on why the status of Nanshi may be rising.

I also asked how Pudong should be considered. A doctor responded that "Pudong

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[5]I discuss this topic at length in Gamble (1991). The following contrasts are drawn from a typical text of the imperial era (Wilson 1887):

Chinese Native City	Foreign Settlement
past/middle ages	present/future
isolation/arrested development	progressive ideas/hope
fever and filth	well paved
struggling and sordid multitude	well-selected population
sordid struggle of life, sloth	industry, thrift, enterprise
decrepitude and decay, squalor	luxury and comfort

was/is really poor [**cha** - this can be "poor" in the sense of poverty and/or quality], even lower than the **xiazhijiao**." Equally typical was the response of a young man who replied that "Pudong is completely different - this is a difference between Shanghainese and country bumpkins (*xiang o nin*/**xiangxiaren**)." He laughed and continued "once you cross the Huangpu River it is considered the countryside (**xiangxia**)." Similarly, an editor described the **xiazhijiao** as "like the second world" and Pudong as "like the third world".

On 18 April 1990, China's Premier Li Peng announced that a 350 square kilometre site, Pudong New District, was to be made a national development zone. Large-scale construction has begun in Pudong. Additionally, Pudong has been physically integrated into the rest of the city by the construction of the Nanpu and Yangpu bridges and an under-river tunnel. It will be interesting to examine how representations of Pudong change in coming years. Intimations of Pudong's changing status were already apparent. Until recently a popular saying commented: "It's better to have a bed in Puxi, than a whole house in Pudong" (**bu yao Pudong yi zhuang lou, zhi yao Puxi yi zhang chuang**). This assessment had begun to change - a young architectural worker told me that she had recently chosen to work in a company in Pudong. She added that her mother, who was born in Pudong, had been very keen to leave Pudong to study and work in Shanghai. She commented that "it's very different now, Pudong was seen as the countryside. In the past Pudongers had to cross to Puxi to buy many things they needed, now Puxi shops are opening branches in Pudong."

3.2.1 The Basis of the Distinction

When I asked people what they considered the origin and content of the distinction between the **shang** and **xiazhijiao** five main types of factor were mentioned - historical, housing and environmental, social and cultural differences, occupational and economic status, regional origin of inhabitants. In this section I examine each of these facets. Although different informants may stress one factor more than another there was a broad degree of consensus. In addition, the factors were invariably regarded as linked and mutually reinforcing.

It was often remarked that the **shangzhijiao** accorded with the former foreign concessions. These were described as having been the most prosperous (**fanhua**) with the best housing. It was "where foreigners lived" or, as a young teacher remarked, "where people with status (**shenfen**) lived." The editor mentioned above observed that "Huangpu

district is in-between **shang** and **xia**, inclining towards **shang**. It was where businessmen, compradors and those who worked for foreign banks lived. Therefore, they could not be without **wenhua** (culture/education)." Informants considered the current positive evaluation of the **shangzhijiao** area as a continuation of its historical preeminence. The former French zone was the most highly rated **shang** area, the Japanese zone the lowest and the International Settlement area in-between these two. By contrast, a Communist Party member in his sixties described the **xiazhijiao** as being the pre-1949 Chinese run part of Shanghai (**huajie**). A resident of Yangpu observed that "the level is lower (**cengci di**) in Yangpu. No foreigners lived in Yangpu." The term **cengci** was often used to refer to moral, educational or price levels. As noted in previous chapters, the notion of "foreign" and "modern" are closely associated.

The terms **shang** and **xiazhijiao** do not appear to have emerged until long after 1949. The editor mentioned above believed these terms had only emerged during the reform era. However, a Huaihai Road resident in her fifties had first heard the terms used during the early 1970s. She believed that they would not have been used any earlier in the Cultural Revolution as "then everyone was supposed to be equal." A teacher felt that "before the Cultural Revolution the **shang/xia** difference did not matter so much. Then people from these areas did not meet so there was no conflict (**chongtu**). But when Mao Zedong carried out the Cultural Revolution and, for example, people from Zhabei were moved to the **shangzhijiao** contradictions arose."

Housing, architecture, and general appearance (**mianmao**) were described as key components of being **shang**. It was noted, for example, that many houses in the **shangzhijiao** are Western style and have gardens. One woman, a resident of Yangpu, observed that before 1949 places such as Jingan were where the rich lived and that it still has many villas. She asked rhetorically "how many villas are there in Yangpu district?". These architectural differences seemed to be important even though many of the foreign-designed dwellings intended for single households were now divided among several families.

Shang areas were said to have a lower population density and be cleaner and quieter. One man compared the area around Fudan University - considered a **shang** area within a **xia** area - to Zhabei. "In Fudan's space (**kongjian**) people do not disturb or influence each other. But in Zhabei people are mixed-up (**hunhe**) together, for example, three generations live together. There is no quiet environment in which to study and improve one's **wenhua** level." It is notable that traditionally several generations living

together was regarded as the ideal family and accorded high prestige (Baker 1979: 1). In early 1990s Shanghai, the concept of "five generations under one roof" was more likely to be associated with over-crowding and families condemned by inadequate housing space and poverty to reside together. Space is undoubtedly of particular concern to Shanghainese because of its scarcity - in downtown areas the population density can reach 80,000 per square kilometre (Xu 1993: 2).[6]

Inferior housing with poor, often communal, washing and cooking facilities was said to characterise the **xiazhijiao**. A former resident of Huaihai Road commented that **xiazhijiao** areas are "rubbishy places" (*laxi pi sɛ ge difang*/**laxi biesan de difang**). This informant recalled that before 1949 Zhabei, Nanshi and Putuo had dwellings called **gendilong** ("rolling along the ground dragons") which were simply bamboo frames covered with matting. He added that "this is where what we now call **mingong** (migrant workers) lived. Like contemporary **mingong** they did all the hardest manual work and Shanghainese, as now, had nothing to do with them." A doctor reckoned that even though the old slums had gone the population density was still much higher and incomes lower in these districts.

Architectural differences were closely associated with notions that there were differences of "cultural/educational level" (**wenhua cengci**) or "quality" (**suzhi**) between residents of the **shang** and **xiazhijiao**. It appears that educational level and indicators of material well-being were correlated, as though the former legitimated, implicitly, the latter. Huaihai Road and areas adjacent to it were considered especially **shang**. A woman in her early forties who was born and brought up on Huaihai Road felt that "there were more codes of conduct (**yi tao guiju**) there. There was a distinct demarcation line (**mingxian jiexian**) between us and those brought up elsewhere. We dressed more smartly than those in other areas, had better manners, were more civilized (**wenming**) and had more etiquette (**liyi**)." It is interesting to bear in mind that this woman is describing a childhood in the 1960s, including the early Cultural Revolution, when the rhetoric of egalitarianism and equality were at their height.

The editor mentioned above told me that in the **shangzhijiao** far more students pass university entrance exams than in the **xiazhijiao**. He added that those who go abroad from Shanghai are mostly from the **shangzhijiao**. This view was shared by a young woman from Yangpu district who told me "in my imagination I have the idea that the shang ˇ **zhijiao** has a connection to overseas (**he haiwai you guanxi**). For example, people

[6]Pellow cites a density of 40,000 people per km² for the municipality of Shanghai (1993: 397).

there have relatives abroad or have studied abroad." People in the **shangzhijiao** were also said to pay attention to "outward appearance" (**jiangjiu waimian**) - to dress and make-up. The editor remarked "as soon as you look at somebody, you can tell if they're from **shang** or **xiazhijiao**. The latter are uncouth (**tuli tuqi** - "the air or manner of soil"). One sometimes sees girls in the **xiazhijiao** who wear rings on every finger like they're opening a jewellery exhibition, it's unbearably vulgar (**su bu ke nai**)." More generally, the "atmosphere" (**fengqi**) of the **xiazhijiao** may be described as bad and these areas as dirty and chaotic. A doctor told me that in the **shang** areas one may say of a neighbour "this person has come from the **xiazhijiao**" (*di ge nin si ho tsa ko lei ge*/**zhige ren shi xiazhijiao laide**). He explained that this could be said "to curse somebody who behaves like this."[7]

The pre-1949 occupational and economic differences between the **shang** and **xiazhijiao** appeared to have persisted in contemporary Shanghai. The doctor remarked that before 1949 in the **shangzhijiao** "people's quality (**suzhi**) and education were high and they had good white collar jobs. Refugees went to the **xiazhijiao**, they were lower strata (**xiaceng**) people. Since 1949 there has been a continuation of this distinction." The **shangzhijiao** were considered to have more professional workers and places such as Xuhui district were where "old cadres" (**lao ganbu**) and officials (**dangguan de**) lived.

A high proportion of industrial workers and other low status (**dixia**) occupations was described as characterising **xia** areas. A young architectural worker told me "**xiazhijiao** are where industrial workers live, they are rough/crude (**culu**), comparatively poor and people have more children."[8] An academic's view was that:

> In Yangpu district there are many industrial workers and this is **xiazhijiao**. People who want face do all they can to move to the **shangzhijiao**, even though the housing there may be worse than where they moved out from. Some girls want to marry somebody who lives in the **shangzhijiao**, (he adds, half jokingly) so if you live there it's easier to get a wife.

It was striking that none of my informants used the term **jieji** (class) in the discourse on **shang/xia**. My older informants especially would have been well trained in the use of the language of class. It may well be that the ideological overtones of **jieji** are

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[7]"**Subeiren**" (Subei person) may be used in a similar fashion to describe somebody as being of low status. A bundle of notions seemed to overlap - poverty, chaos, bad taste, low status, **xia zhi jiao**, Subei people.

[8]In Shanghai, I often heard people describe having many children as an indication of lack of culture/education (**wenhua**).

just too overwhelming. The nearest informants came to this terminology was to use the terms (translated from English) of "white" and "blue" collar (**bai/lanling**).

A resident of Yangpu described this district as **xiazhijiao** "because many poor people live here." A scientific research worker remarked that in the **xiazhijiao** people's incomes and social status were lower. He contrasted this to a **shang** area such as Xuhui and especially Kanping Road: "If you say you live there others will know that your status (**shenfen**) is high. Government people with special power (**tequan**) can live there." He continued "in my **danwei** the leaders live in comparatively bustling (**renao**) places but the workers mostly live in the countryside (**xiangxia**). If somebody from Zhabei gets rich they will want to move to the **shangzhijiao**."[9]

Regional origin was often mentioned in descriptions of the **xiazhijiao**. Specifically, a high proportion of Subei people was closely associated with an area being **xia**. A scientific researcher told me "there are many Jiangbei people in Zhabei and they form a small society (**xiao shehui**) - it is dirty, chaotic and poor (**zang, luan, cha**)." There was often a coalescence between regional origin and occupation. The comments of a young teacher were typical, "areas were **xia** because they were industrial districts with many industrial workers and especially non-Shanghainese (**wai laide**) workers. It is the same as the way people now look down on migrant workers (**mingong**). They were especially Subei people. Putuo is still a complete mess (**yita hutu**), they're all Subei people." Similarly, a long term resident of Huaihai Road remarked that residents of the **shangzhijiao** area of Xujiahui described another part of Xujiahui as being **xiazhijiao** "because many Subei people lived there." It was notable that in describing the **shangzhijiao** regional origin was not mentioned. One young man considered that Nanshi was not usually called **xiazhijiao** even though its housing was very dilapidated because "it is where 'old Shanghainese' (**lao Shanghai**) live." It appears that the dominant social group acquires a degree of "invisibility" (cf. WASPS in America).

3.2.2 Changing Views of the **Shang/Xiazhijiao**

A man in his sixties felt that the difference between the **shang** and **xiazhijiao** was at its greatest during the Maoist period "because no new houses were built at that time, it was like two worlds (**liang ge shijie**)." Most of my informants felt that the

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[9]In an interview with the share dealer "Millions Yang" the interviewer found it strange that Yang had not moved from his native Zhabei to Xuhui, Jingan or Hongqiao districts. Yang agreed that these areas were "extremely good" but remarked that "it would not feel right for an emancipated 'poor peasant' like myself to move there." "**Jinri Yang Baiwan**" (Yang Baiwan Today) SWYB 4-10 June 1993: 4.

shang/xiazhijiao distinction had weakened (**danbo/danhua**) during the reform era. The two main reasons cited for this were improvements to the housing stock and changes related to the reform policies themselves.

The demolition of poor quality housing and the construction of much new public housing (**gongfang**) since the late 1980s was considered to have weakened the **shang/xia** distinction.[10] The new opportunities for wealth making which the reforms had provided also played a part in reducing the distinction. A young architect felt that until recent years there had been a clear difference in wealth between the **shang** and **xiazhijiao**. Now, however, one could not say clearly where the rich lived since people, for example, in Yangpu may become wealthy through business. In addition, if they became rich and wished to buy property most commercially available housing was not in the **shangzhijiao** but in suburban areas such as Hongqiao.

A young businessman felt that the concept of **shang** and **xiazhijiao** had also weakened because of a "change in people's way of thinking (**gainian bianhua**)." He observed that:

> Money is now used to judge a person's worth (**jiazhi**). Previously **wenhua** was the most important thing in China. It didn't matter if you were poor. Manual work and service jobs were regarded as **xiazhijiao** occupations with low status (**didang**). But now this is not the case. For example, a hairdresser or a bar worker may be regarded as high status (**gaodang**) and have style (**qipai**). Previously these occupations were seen as low status (**didang**), now they are popular (**chixiang**). If they have money this gives them status.

An interesting aspect of these comments is that the "previously" time period referred to is the pre-reform era when state rhetoric stressed minimizing differences between mental and manual labour. It was clear to me that many service occupations were still regarded as inferior but this does not, of course, affect this informant's perception of a shift.

This businessman felt that Nanshi district was no longer considered **xiazhijiao** because many residents engaged in business and may be quite well off.[11] However, a former resident of Huaihai Road considered that Nanshi was still **xiazhijiao**. She agreed that "many people in Nanshi are richer now" but added:

> This doesn't matter, these people are **getihu** whose **wenhua** is insufficient. People may praise them to their face, but in their hearts they still despise them and don't want their children to marry them. They feel that in the past they were really

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[10]Residents were often rehoused in suburban areas. Huangpu district, for instance, was being depopulated at the rate of 10,000-30,000 people per year.

[11]Physically Nanshi had changed very little. The narrow streets, densely packed low-level housing and extremely high population density present enormous problems for redevelopment.

> poor, their home didn't even have a single decent chair, now they're rich, they're really rubbish (*bi jia le xi*/**feichang cha**). In Huaihai Road many people have mahogany furniture.

This woman appears still to be using the "traditional" criterion which clearly allies **wenhua** (culture/education) with wealth in contrast to the previous informant's stress solely upon wealth as a key signifier of status. It is also relevant that my female informant retained a strong sense of moral superiority on the basis of her upbringing in Huaihai Road, a commitment not shared by the young businessman. A mutual friend described the latter as having been brought up in the **xiazhijiao**, in a home with "three generations living together." As noted above, the prestige accorded several generations living together is clearly reversed, for in Shanghai it now served as a synonym for poverty.

The persistence of the notions of **shang** and **xiazhijiao** demonstrates the failure of the Maoist rhetoric which sought to reduce differences between mental and manual labour and produce an egalitarian society. In practice, the relative status of different types of labour appears to have been unchanged - white collar occupations were still highly regarded and manual work and service jobs looked down upon.[12] An interesting aspect of the **shang/xia** discourse is that people used a geographical idiom to describe what an outside observer may consider as largely class distinctions.

In the previous chapter attention was drawn to the way in which Maoist rhetoric sought to overcome urban-rural distinctions. Evidence suggests a sharp disjuncture between this rhetoric and the actual consequences of socio-economic policies which appear to have reinforced this divide. In a similar way, Emily Honig (1989a, 1990) argues that prejudice against Subei people persisted after 1949 as a consequence of state policies. Similarly, I would argue that post-1949 socio-economic policies also contributed to entrenching the **shang/xia** distinction. Lack of capital investment in the city enabled pre-existing inequalities to persist: for instance, most of the better housing and the main entertainment centres were still in the **shangzhijiao**. The limited degree of social mobility, including inability to change jobs or move residence, of the pre-reform era also helped entrench these inequalities.

The case of the woman in her early forties who had been brought up on Huaihai Road illustrates the persistence of distinctions. She described schooling in the Cultural Revolution as haphazard and limited. Her (well-educated) parents often kept her at home

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[12]The way in which "bad elements" were given such work as a punishment would have reinforced these views.

and educated her themselves. In a long discussion on this topic the impression I gained was that educational provision generally deteriorated but that families such as hers could ameliorate the consequences of this. In other words, policies designed to bring about equality tended to have the opposite effect.

A further irony is that the **shang/xia** distinctions only appear to have been declining in importance during the reform era, when little attention is paid to egalitarian ideological imperatives. For instance, the status of some service workers had risen and the previous correlation between **shangzhijiao** and wealth and **xiazhijiao** and poverty was beginning to alter. Architectural changes were also reducing the **shang/xia** distinction. Until recently it appeared that new, better quality public housing was mainly allocated to those with (politically) higher status jobs. A local government official said that this had begun to change and that now "poor people" may be moved into public housing.

There were, however, also ways in which new boundaries were being (re)created. For instance, in 1993 Huaihai Road was extensively refurbished and many of its stores now sold expensive, imported goods. A retired resident of Luwan district recalled that when he was young Huaihai Road was "very refined" (**gaoya**), with relatively few people, many jewellery shops and Western style restaurants. It was of "superior quality" (**gaodang**). He noted that the city government intends to make Huaihai Road more **gaodang**, "we can already feel that this has happened, the **laobaixing** are afraid to enter the shops on Huaihai Road, they cannot afford the prices."

3.3 Two Points - Work Place/Home

In this section and the next I focus upon the "two points" referred to in the introductory comment. It seems reasonable to depict them as "enclosed" spaces. Although Shanghai's sixteenth century city wall was demolished in 1911, regarded as a "relic of medievalism, out of keeping with modern China" (Pott 1928: 192), many walls remain in contemporary Shanghai.[13] Work units (**danwei**) are often surrounded by a physical wall and many houses are clustered in compounds with a surrounding wall. Shanghai has many "new villages" (**xincun**) which were built in the early 1950s (see Fung 1981: 281-2). One "new village" I visited was bounded by a wall, it had a nursery and a primary school, various shops and repair centres. Until their teens a young person could easily live enclosed within this small circle. As in many residential areas, the people to

[13]Chang writes that "[w]alls have been so central to the Chinese idea of a city that the traditional words for city and wall are identical" (1977: 75).

whom the flats had originally been assigned were all employed in the same **danwei**. It was socio-spatial organization of this type which produced a form of urban life that was "unusually sheltered" (Naughton 1995a: 25).

The spatial metaphors people used when talking about **danwei** appear to support the notion of them as bounded, discrete entities. This was expressed in the way a person who left a state **danwei** and moved, for example, to a joint venture would talk about this as having **chulai** - "come out" or "emerged". In a similar way, the unemployed may be described as **liu zai shehui** - "remaining in society" as opposed to being "in" a **danwei**. The polite way to see off a guest (**songren**) also supports the notion of bounded enclosures. A host displays concern for guests by physically accompanying them across the boundaries from the inner space to the outside (**waimian**).

The incorporation of a new, adult female family member through marriage involves a number of rituals which highlight the sense of a journey from one bounded unit to another. I watched a wedding video of a couple's spatial and ritual journey. As the bride left her natal home (**niangjia**) just before she stepped into the car she removed her shoes and puts on a new pair. The bride later explained to me that this was because she should not take any of the **niangjia**'s soil (**tu**) with her - it is said to represent either the **niangjia**'s wealth (**caiqi**) or bad luck (**huiqi**). The bride must also cross flames (**huo**) upon arrival at her new home with the family of the groom.

Although the bride's marital journey involves elements of separation and transfer of rights and obligations it also provides the basis for an ongoing relationship between the two families. This was symbolized in a ritual I witnessed in a wedding at Shanghai's Songjiang county. Upon his arrival at the bride's home to collect her a "custom of the place" (**bendi de xiguan**) included the groom's presentation of six gifts including a fish. When the groom left with the bride, the bride gave him eight gifts including the fish. The fish was especially important I was told because it "swims back and forth" (**you lai you qu**) a homonym of which means "to come and go". A participant explained that this signifies the hope that there would be a good relationship between the two families with many reciprocal visits (**liang jia laiwang miqie**)."

3.3.1 Boundaries and Enclosures

Both at my university accommodation and when visiting people in the city I often felt that the various entrances and boundaries were like Russian dolls - each one opened revealed another doll in a seemingly endless succession. At my accommodation the main

gate of the university had gatekeepers. The entrance to the foreign students building had permanent doormen to keep out all Chinese except for students of the university. Each floor had a worker employed to clean the corridors and communal areas. It seemed like a series of ever finer filters to exclude outsiders and prevent contacts deemed "undesirable" for our studies.[14]

On a visit to an ordinary flat I noted the following: there is a wall around the compound with a gate through which a car could pass but often only a small gate just large enough for a bicycle and rider to pass through is kept open; usually there are people observing who enters or leaves; beside the entrance to the building (one of several in the compound) is an office usually manned by several elderly people. In addition, a group of 3-4 people invariably sit in this area talking and/or knitting; the lift has an operator; each of the four quarters of each floor has a door which can be locked; the flat itself has a barred metal outer door and an inner wooden door.

William Jenner in The Tyranny of History (1992: 83-102) has written convincingly about the persistence of walls, boundaries, enclosures and compounds of various types throughout Chinese history. He writes, for instance, of the way walls have been erected to keep foreigners out. As I have shown in earlier chapters it was evident to me that many Shanghainese conceived of national "walls" in a similar way to those described by Jenner. At another level Jenner describes the way "[o]ffices, factories, schools and housing projects are walled or fenced off and gatekeepers put in place to monitor the movements of all who come or go" (86). Deborah Davis describes how, in the Maoist era, many "citizens spent their lives living and working behind gated walls" (Davis 1995: 2). In these instances, my informants did not necessarily share Jenner's approach that these walls were detrimental and oppressive. I suggest that the cultural significance of walls may vary. The potential for surveillance in the residences described above was clearly very great. However, informants I spoke with did not consider this a problem. Indeed people were more inclined to complain when these gatekeepers were absent, feeling that they enhanced security. In China the degree of enclosedness appears to bear a relationship to status. In imperial times Emperors bodies were enclosed within myriad enclosures inside the Forbidden City, this "architectural design symbolically displayed and reinforced Imperial power" (Rofel 1992: 102). This practice continues with the current

[14]Foreign students were still privileged in their degree of freedom when compared to Chinese students. At Fudan University, for example, male students were banned from visiting female students' dormitories. In addition, female students had recently all been rehoused in dormitories inside a smaller, adjacent compound outside the main campus walls.

political leaders who live within a modern equivalent of the Imperial Palace at Zhongnanhai. The homes of poor people, by contrast, are far less enclosed and daily activities such as cooking and washing hair become public events.

Jenner notes the fear of **luan** ("chaos") in China. However, he appears to overlook the extent to which many Chinese people consider walls, boundaries and surveillance as valuable and essential means to prevent chaos. It may well be that attitudes towards control have varied over time in Britain. For instance, Forbes describes, with admiration, the degree of orderliness he found in Shanghai in the 1840s. He describes how most by-streets had a small gate at each end which was locked at nine o'clock and that "[s]ometimes each house, but invariably each street, has its watchman, who patrols all night beating a small drum" (1848: 21).

Many informants complained to me that crime in the city was increasing, although they considered Shanghai relatively secure and well-ordered in comparison to other parts of China. A young Shanghainese woman told me that she felt safe in Shanghai at night. She felt that Shanghai people "keep within bounds (**yueshu**)." In this sense it seems that "walls" provided a haven, a retreat, a non-porous private sphere. The blame for rising crime was laid on migrant workers. It was those coming from beyond the bounds of Shanghai who brought such disorder.

3.3.2 The Work Place

Chinese state work units (**danwei**) represent the epitome of a socialist planned economy. Mayfair Yang's (1989a: 31-2) description of **danwei** as "total institutions" since they "oversee functions of production and reproduction, social welfare, indoctrination and surveillance" captures effectively and succinctly the nature of the **danwei**'s impact.[15] Under this (Maoist) model the **danwei** is the place where the **dangan** (individual dossier) is kept and is responsible for the supply of housing, social security, medical care, income and social status. Associated with the **danwei** system is a high level of both job security and worker dependency upon the enterprise (Walder 1988).

A particularly high degree of inclusivity (and exclusivity) is found in large state enterprises such as *Jinshan Oil and Chemical Plant* and *Baoshan Steel Plant*, both

[15]For the purposes of analysis in this section I regard these units as an "ideal type" model. It is important to note that even during the peak of collectivization many work places never achieved the ideal model. The full range of benefits and security applied only to permanent workers in larger state enterprises, about 42% of the industrial workforce in 1981 (Walder 1987: 59). Additionally, to an extent, the use of the gift economy challenged and subverted principles of state distribution and "represents an oppositional force to the paternalistic normalizing and disciplinary power in China" (Yang 1986: 9).

founded in the 1970s. The Jinshan plant is like a small-scale city.[16] It provides everything from nursery and primary schools to shops, recreational and leisure facilities to a university, old people's home, television station, hospital and crematorium. Workers may be encapsulated in the **danwei** at all stages and in all points of their lives. A company executive described Jinshan as the "mother and father" (**fumu**) - it considers itself responsible, for example, to help introduce potential marriage partners.

William Jenner (1992) describes a mental and often physical walling off of work places into discrete units.[17] To an extent my own research confirms this perception. For instance, a teacher told me that "anything beyond our **danwei** is distant and we take little interest in it". I had the sense of her **danwei** as not only a literally but also a socially enclosed space. A younger state **danwei** employee told me that "when you enter a **danwei** your self (**ziji**) becomes the **danwei**'s, all aspects of your life are contained (**bao**) by it. It has no connection to society." A Shanghai sociologist told me that there is a lack of links between units in a local area, for example, between local factories and local Residents' Committees. In many instances, people resorted to **guanxi** - particularistic relationships - in order to negotiate the vertical hierarchies of such cellularized units (Yang 1994: 75-108).

During the Maoist era spatial controls over people were generally very strict.[18] Work units were "multi-functional compounds" and the "work-unit compound became a miniature city within its walls...entered through a guarded gate" (Gaubatz 1995: 30). A former "counter-revolutionary" recalled how during the Cultural Revolution he had not been allowed to use the main gate of his **danwei**. Instead he and other "cow demon and snake spirits" (**niugui sheshen** - "forces of evil; class enemies of all descriptions" CED 1988: 499) were compelled to enter and exit via a hole in the wall designed for rubbish collection. Such people often felt that they were denied the right to be human (**zuoren de quanli**). This was here symbolised by denying them the right to use the entrances and

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[16]Jinshan is a county of Shanghai seventy kilometres from the city centre. The plant is one of China's six largest enterprises. It has some 60,000 thousand employees, around 30,000 of whom commute from urban Shanghai. It contributes about 10% of Shanghai's tax to the central government.

[17]Rofel describes how Hangzhou silk weaving factories were also internally spatially differentiated with the "main offices of the party secretary and factory director...set in a separate building well apart from the workshops...completely walled off from the shop floor...[by] thick concrete walls" (1992: 101).

[18]This statement requires some qualification. For certain sections of the population the Cultural Revolution provided significant spatial (and social) mobility. Rofel (1992) describes instances of this in Hangzhou silk weaving factories. Some workers there physically walked away from their work position to engage in politics and others "mix[ed] the space of the factory with 'domestic' space by doing their laundry, shopping, and washing bicycles at the factory or during work hours" (97).

exits of humans. This man had little choice but to be associated with a state **danwei**, access to which was controlled by political "gatekeepers". Ultimately suicide was the only "route" he felt remained open to him.

During the reform era the "total institution" model of Chinese **danwei** has been undermined by changes in the overall economic structure and within **danwei** themselves. Changes implemented in the 1980s meant that in large state **danwei** "subtle yet important changes have taken place within the old frameworks" (1992: 110). In 1992-4 **danwei** were becoming increasingly permeable and porous entities - vertical linkages were eroding and wide-ranging horizontal networks becoming more important. Both the proportion of workers in such **danwei** and the degree of inclusivity of **danwei** was decreasing. There was a distinct trend for functions formerly dominated by **danwei** to become disentangled. **Danwei** were losing their "normative power" (Yang 1989a: 31). Important changes included the extensive sale of housing in the 1990s, the erosion of welfare benefits and moves towards the introduction of insurance schemes to replace **danwei**-based welfare benefits, and the cessation of political study sessions in most **danwei**. The adoption of 1-5 year labour contracts, first introduced for new employees in 1986, had also reduced job security (see Wilson 1990: 49-50). In the most extreme cases **danwei** became "empty shells". A redundant factory worker, for instance, described her **danwei** as a **kong jiazi** (bare outline, mere skeleton) where city employees were made redundant and production transferred to the countryside.

The new "socialist market economy" offered workers alternative sources of income and status. As labour increasingly becomes regarded as a commodity it is "tradeable" and transferable. Workers were freer to move from one state unit to another and between state and collective enterprises. There were also opportunities for workers to move to private companies, joint or wholly foreign-funded ventures or to establish themselves as private entrepreneurs. Additionally, as many as five million Shanghai workers remained in their **danwei** but engaged in some form of sideline occupation.[19]

Danwei retention of individual dossiers still gave them an important degree of control over employees. For instance, permission to get married or for a passport was given via this dossier. However, it was increasingly possible for those with sufficient money to buy their way around **danwei** attempts at control, for example, employees who had signed contracts could break them by paying "compensation". Some of my informants had an extremely complex bureaucratic existence. In several cases, their

[19]CD 8 March 1993: 4.

dossier was not at their current place of work but at a **danwei** they had previously worked at. Sometimes retaining the dossier at the former work place was a strategy - good personal connections there would make it easier to obtain bureaucratic permissions. In other cases, workers had left **danwei** without permission and would deal later with the consequences of this invisible "cord".

3.3.3 Tearing Down the Walls

Many official institutions, including schools and local government offices, had **poqiang kaidian** (break down the walls and open a shop) in an effort to increase revenues (see also Davis 1995: 3). The breaking down of school walls (**poqiang**) to set up shops is both a literal instance of changing boundaries and a microcosm of wider architectural and social trends in the city.[20] In particular, it demonstrates the blurring of what used to be quite segregated spaces or spheres.

Since 1988 schools have been allowed to set up shops (**kaidian**), factories and courses to make money. One of the first schools to **poqiang kaidian** is located in a busy part of Hongkou district. After unsuccessful attempts at producing and selling radios the school **poqiang kaidian**.[21] This development may be taken as indicative of a wider shift from a stress upon production to one upon consumption. One wall of the school was converted into shop fronts - regulations stipulated that they must be closed off at the rear where they back onto the school - and sixty were rented out. This school was successful in its commercial ventures because of its location on a "city mouth" (**shikou**), a "hot and noisy" (**renao**) place. In the first year, 1988-89, the school made 1,000,000¥. In 1992-93, it made 4,700,000¥, vastly more than the 800,000¥ provided by the city Education Bureau to this key school.

As a result of the school's **poqiang kaidian** many other businesses were encouraged to move to this area. This commercial success brought a danger to the school. The covetous local authorities wanted to relocate the school, knock down the current single storey shops and replace them with high rise buildings which it could rent out at high rents. However, one teacher felt that this danger has receded because "now everyone is going into business, there is more independence (**dulixing bijiao qiang**) and the state

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[20]This includes an increasing differentiation of the cityscape. The Maoist ideal was for each district of the city to be self-sufficient. Recently, in cities such as Shanghai, there is the development of specialized districts. These changes are discussed more extensively by Piper Gaubatz (1995).

[21]A teacher pointed out that originally schoolchildren had engaged in labour as a part of their "thought education" (**sixiang jiaoyu**). Only later did profit (**liyi**) become the main motive for such activities.

can no longer simply confiscate property in this way." Once again, these comments are indicative of wider changes, most particularly the greater degree of individual "space", a widening of the margins at the expense of state power. In Summer 1994, I was told that the school had set up a joint venture with a Hong Kong company to develop this zone.

Commercial success brought big changes to the school. The premises had been refurbished, teachers received higher salaries and many fringe benefits - newly appointed teachers received a higher salary than headmasters of many Shanghai schools, the library was being computerised and could buy "as many books as it likes". The school had bought large colour televisions, video machines and a satellite television. In addition, 600,000¥ had been spent on setting up a school television station.

In 1992 the school embarked upon another money-making venture. It bought a 5,000 square metre plot of land in the Zhoushan Islands and formed a joint venture with a Hong Kong company to develop the land as a tourist resort and conference centre. I was told that an important reason the school had entered into this project was because it had "too much money and people were jealous" (**yanhong**). By using the money in this way "people could not see it" (**ren yanjing kanbujian**).

This school is a remarkable instance of persistent privilege. It was built in 1913 as a private boys' school for foreign children. After 1949, as one of Shanghai's 26 key (**zhongdian**) middle schools (out of a city total of 800) it was still marked out as a privileged place. An educational bureau cadre told me that parents tried hard to get their children into a key middle school. He admitted that "if children attend a key school they have a good chance of going to university. Otherwise they have almost no chance." In 1992, at this school, all its final year students won university places. It provides excellent facilities and can attract high quality teachers. Whereas many university graduates did their best to avoid becoming school teachers, graduates of Shanghai's top universities were competing to be appointed as teachers at this school.

This case study provides a microcosm of many trends in contemporary Shanghai. In a literal sense by "breaking down its wall" the school had affected the appearance of the city. The school's vertical links to the Shanghai Education Bureau (and through it to the State Education Commission in Beijing) had diminished in importance now that they provided less than 20% of the school's funding. In their place, the school was embroiled in a much more complex network of relationships - both personal and contractual - with former pupils, commercial organizations and local government departments. Although all the staff and pupils were affected in some way by the **poqiang kaidian**, the school tried

to contain and control these activities by appointing two teachers as "gatekeepers" to act on behalf of the school in its commercial transactions.

Another significant aspect of this case, is that it highlights the growing inequalities within the city. As a key school it already received state funding in excess of ordinary middle schools. Its commercial success, largely based upon its prime down-town location, now placed it in a "super-league" with few peers - its income in 1993 was nearly six times its state subsidy. Entrance to this school was still open to children in its catchment area. However, as with other key schools, parents may attempt to use the "backdoor" - including the use of "connections" and bribery - to enrol their children. Others may use "**hukou** strategies", for instance, one mother I knew moved her daughter's household registration to her grandmother's house so as to be in this school's catchment area. Shanghai already had several private schools and there was clearly an incentive to make this a fee paying school.[22]

I noted above the reduced degree of enclosure of work units in the 1990s. However, in the case of this school a rather different scenario had developed. This school was now materially able to offer a much more comprehensive array of socialist-type benefits to its employees. Thus, whilst its employees were now free to leave this **danwei**, they may also be reluctant to leave since they would lose these benefits - they remained tightly "bound" to the **danwei**, although though the nature of this link had altered.

3.3.4 Beyond the **Danwei**

Workers who left state **danwei** separated themselves to varying degrees from the surveillance and control of the state. Joint ventures and foreign-funded enterprises were less intertwined with the state. However, it would be mistaken to conceptualize them as necessarily "freer" environments. Amongst informants considering working in joint ventures, I found that higher salaries, better promotion prospects and more interesting work were often weighed against the *loss* of personal freedom. It was widely believed that foreign-funded ventures applied much stricter attendance regulations and expected more intensive work than state **danwei**. In addition, since many of these ventures did not provide accommodation, employment in them often meant that employees must continue

[22]I visited a private primary school which required a one-off payment of 10,000¥ and charged annual fees. From the school's register of pupils' parents it was clear that many were senior executives in joint ventures, involved in the media or worked abroad. Local newspaper reports have already questioned the establishment of such "aristocrats' schools" (**guizu xuexiao**), for example, "**'Guizu' Xianxiang Manyi**" (A Discussion on the Phenomenon of "Aristocrats") XMWB 18 January 1993: 10.

to live in the parental home. Thus increased freedom in the sphere of employment may well be offset by (even) less choice in where one lived.

Other possibilities for workers may offer a less constrained existence. An archetype of mobility are the private motorcycle "taxis" which proliferated in Shanghai during the early 1990s. More generally, private entrepreneurs (**getihu**) often inhabited lateral or liminal niches between units. Small-scale enterprises within the city were spatially dispersed and differentiated and provided new locales to earn a livelihood. Zhapu Road, for example, a narrow street in central Shanghai, with a high concentration of private restaurants and neon lights was described by some as "little Hong Kong".[23] The re-legalization of private enterprise had also allowed a recolonization of public spaces by private traders and hawkers.

Wujiaochang, on the outskirts of the city, also had many **getihu**. In many respects it was a liminal zone, a place of rural-urban interaction. As Naughton (1995a: 26) remarks it is in such spatial margins, as with social margins, that change is particularly rapid. Informants told me that until recently this area had been rural (**xiangxia**). Wujiaochang now had many street stalls - often run by moonlighters. Informants sometimes described this area as **luanqi bazao** - chaotic and disorganized. As such it can be contrasted with, say, the Hongqiao district around Shanghai airport. This was another marginal zone - it was where most early foreign investment and residence was allowed (and contained). A young man described, with great approval, Hongqiao development zone as "completely foreign style" (**wanquan waiguohua**). From this and other conversations, it was evident that his view of "foreign" included notions of modernity, progress, order and organization.

Those who had succeeded in the share market also inhabited very different socio-spatial environments. Wealthy share dealers (**dahu**) sometimes resigned from their **danwei**. They could choose to be based at any of the city's three hundred plus dealing centres. These centres are a striking instance of a new type of place.[24] Share dealing centres had rooms divided into various categories, with separate dealing rooms for large, medium and small scale dealers. This spatial hierarchy matched a wider process whereby wealth, rather than primarily political status, provided access to more space, comfort and access to information. Access to the separate dealing rooms (**dahushi**) for the use of

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[23]Some of the capital for this development has come from wealthy overseas Chinese.

[24]It is noticeable that these centres attract clusters of shops and restaurants around their vicinity.

wealthier dealers was generally restricted to those with capital in excess of 500,000¥. It was also becoming possible for wealthy dealers to operate from home. A share exchange manager estimated that some one hundred people had a computer and analysis software at home and did deals via the telephone.

The different type of work place which the **dahushi** constitutes was evident in conversations with **dahu**. I asked two **dahu** - one a retired engineer the other a former factory worker - relaxing in the black vinyl chairs of their special dealing room how they would characterise relationships between fellow **dahu**. They both felt they were quite good and believed that this was because, unlike in a **danwei**, there was no relationship of profit and loss (**li-hai guanxi**) between them. Thus, for example, if one person made money it was not at the expense of somebody else in the same room. It was *va ta ga* - a dialect expression meaning "has no relationship" (literally "no bridge is built"/**bu da qiao**). In a **danwei**, by contrast, there was such a zero-sum relationship, and there was often competition over housing and other entitlements. In addition, the lack of mobility in Chinese **danwei** meant that workers were often colleagues for many decades. This may foster strong bonds of friendship, but it could also mean that resentments and rivalries smoulder for years. In some instances workers must still work alongside those who had denounced them or were on opposing sides in previous factional disputes.

I gained useful insights on small-scale share buyers (**xiao hu**) in an interview in November 1993 with Zhao Huanan, author of the play "*OK Stock*". Before writing this play, Zhao conducted research among **xiao hu**. He described the crowded dealing room and the space around its doorway as an "environment" (**huanjing**) with a "small society (**xiao shehui**) since it is comprised of people of every **wenhua** (cultural/educational) and occupational level. These people have only one objective, to buy and sell shares." As a place to interview people he felt that this small society possessed a great advantage, "the interviewee is in a place distant from their home and **danwei**. He is a complete individual (**wanzheng de geren**) in this market place." Zhao considered that under these circumstances people expressed themselves very honestly. There was a "high degree of transparency (**toumingdu**) because there is no relationship of loss and gain (**li-hai guanxi**) between share dealers. At home or in the **danwei** they would all have something they wished to conceal (**yinbi**) and would not fully reveal themselves (**biaoxian ziji**)."

Finally, in this section, the demonstrations of Spring 1989 present an interesting instance of social and spatial boundaries being transgressed. For several weeks demonstrators colonized many of the city's streets including the key road area along the

Bund. At the same time as this carnival like atmosphere prevailed some of the boundaries between Shanghai's vertically discrete units were weakened. Even though students demonstrated under their unit's banners there were many instances where barriers between them and Shanghai's "common people" were visibly transcended - this was apparent in the way bystanders supplied the demonstrators with food and drink. In the view of local people I subsequently discussed this topic with, there was a distinct belief that the demonstrations were a product of the reforms and the changes brought about by the "Open Door" policy.

3.4 The Inner Circle: Home Spaces

*They don't put in much effort at work, (laughs) but once they get home they're really busy" (**shangban dao bu zenme yang, huijia dou hen neige...**)*

Middle-aged woman talking about Shanghainese men

For many foreign visitors Shanghai induces a sense of claustrophobia. The slow moving crowds on the streets, and the density of humanity jammed into buses and shops confront even the most transitory visitor. Local residents also frequently lamented "there are too many people!". With space at such a premium it was, perhaps, hardly surprising that my informants could invariably tell me the precise dimensions and volume of their accommodation.

Inadequate housing was regularly cited by Shanghainese as *the* main problem in the city. In 1949, average living space was 3.9 square metres.[25] During the early years of Communist Party rule considerable attention was paid to rehousing slum dwellers. However, after the early 1950s, there was little new housing built or renovation to the existing housing stock. In addition, an inflow of people contributed to a per capita decline in living space. Between 1949 and 1965 per capita living space in Shanghai declined from 3.7m^2 to 2.15m^2 (Howe 1968: 79).[26] However, the rent burden was quite low - about 8% of average income. In the late 1970s, in a city without high rise housing, the population density of Shanghai was five times that of London. The population density in the downtown area was 80,000 per square kilometre (Xu 1993: 2), with up to 170,000 people per square kilometre in some parts (Yan 1985: 121).

Scarcity of housing affected the lives of all residents. To varying degrees, it constrained people's lives and forced them to adopt various strategies. In university

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[25]These and following figures are from Pellow 1993: 398-9.

[26]Walder notes a general per capita urban housing space decline of c.20% between 1952-1977 (1987: 65).

dormitories, for example, seven or eight students shared a single room. The amount of personal space for each student consisted of their bunk bed and a small cupboard, they had to use great ingenuity to minimize conflicts and retain any degree of privacy. Deborah Davis argues that the system of household registration (**hukou**) "determines job and marriage strategies" (1989: 97). My impression was that, if this were true, it is no longer the case. However, residents may resort to an array of strategies designed to circumvent **hukou** regulations (see Pellow 1993: 415-8).

Access to housing played a part in decisions to marry. Most unmarried young adults lived in their parents' homes. Since **danwei** did not allocate accommodation to unmarried employees non-marriage was rarely an option. Even after marriage a substantial proportion of couples still had to live with the bride or groom's parents while they waited for a **danwei** allocation of housing. It was my impression that many couples would prefer to have a flat of their own. Housing could, therefore, be an important criterion in mate selection. I visited a young couple who lived in a large flat (over seventy square metres) inside a compound of buildings belonging to the military. The flat was given to the husband by his father, a retired (**lixiu**) senior army officer. The wife told me that her husband's ability to provide this flat was an important factor in deciding to marry him.

The family and home - which are conflated in the Chinese **jia** - were clearly of central importance to many of my informants. The importance of the home and its members is symbolised during Spring Festival, the main annual holiday. It is a time when scattered family members should return home and be together (**tuanyuan**). The commensal meal on New Year's Eve is for family members and not "outside visitors" (**waike**).[27] The family group remains separate until at least after the mid-day meal of the following day, only then does visiting begin.

In a city the size of Shanghai there is inevitably a diverse array of living environments. Moreover, the experience and perception of these environments will differ in accordance with a range of sociological factors such as age, gender and occupation. For instance, the spatial world of the elderly was often especially restricted. Shanghai's densely packed main streets and pavements were a hazardous environment for the elderly. Many informants spoke of a generation gap (**daigou**) emerging in Shanghai. A young

[27]It is notable that from the day before New Year's Eve until the fifth day of the new lunar month people reverted to the traditional lunar calendar. In a sense one may say that for these few days people are both physically and temporally in a different place to the state.

export salesman considered that this gap had widened because of the rapid pace of change and because older people "have a smaller circle (**quanzi**) and less contact with society."

Often the elderly are spatially marginalized within households. After their children marry, many parents move into a smaller room and the new couple take over the largest room. The best accommodation is accorded those who are the most (re)productive. I watched a documentary programme in which an elderly woman slept on the balcony of her flat while her married children occupied the main flat. A retired man also told me that some parents may have to spend part of the day outside in order to give the young couple some privacy.

Despite such experiential differences it is possible to outline larger trends which were underway. In particular, as work places are becoming less inclusive and less bounded, I suggest that there is a general tendency in the reform era for the home to become an increasingly bounded, separate and privatized sphere. A combination of political, economic and socio-cultural factors are involved in this trend. It is to the inner circle of the home and an examination of these factors that I now turn my attention.

3.4.1 Privatizing the Home

The increased discreteness of the home was particularly evident for those who were persecuted in the past and whose homes could be subject to outside encroachment. Several informants described the "reach of the state" (Shue 1988) as having been much closer to their everyday lives in the past. A number described how their homes had been searched by Red Guards. The fear of such searches must have spread well beyond those who were actual victims. The control of outsiders over private space could extend to the absurd. One family I visited had been searched three times by Red Guards. Three people lived in their two room flat. This was considered too much space for a family with their "bad" class background, but the extra room was too small to be given to anybody else. The solution was to seal up the room with a strip of red paper - with the name of the revolutionary group giving the order and the date - glued across the door forbidding entrance. In the same household I admired a large mahogany dresser (an obvious sign of pre-1949 wealth). Unable to move this large, heavy piece of furniture the Red Guards again resorted to the red tape, prohibiting the cupboard being opened!

Even when not physically entered the home space could be subject to incursion. A member of a family which had been "under the supervision of the masses" during the

Cultural Revolution recalled how the head of the local Residents' Committee would deliberately do his exercises outside their window.[28] He would rest his leg on the fence outside their ground floor flat ostensibly carrying out his exercises but in practice watching their activities. More generally, extending Shue's metaphor, Residents' Committees were described to me as constituting the fingertips of the state. These Committees, set up in the early 1950s, tended to be dominated by elderly women, often cadres' wives, and they acted as a low-level surveillance organization.[29] They were the people best placed to maintain surveillance over purchases made by families, their daily activities and any suspicious visitors. Families told me that even in the early 1980s a "suspicious" visitor would soon be followed by a visit from the police who would question them to discover who it was and what they had wanted. In addition, it was also a popular myth - with at least some foundation in truth - that husbands and wives dared not speak openly during the Cultural Revolution. Once again, the reach of the state could transcend the physical boundaries of the home.

The post-Mao depoliticization of everyday life included a reduction in the number of communal activities. In addition, Residents' Committees have lost much of their overtly political role. However, some informants pointed out that their present benign role could change if the government directed them. There was some evidence of this after June 4, 1989 when families and neighbours were encouraged to turn-in "counter-revolutionary elements". More generally, in place of fear I found disinterest in their activities, especially amongst young people. Rather than complaints about their surveillance activities elderly residents, in particular, complained that their local Residents' Committees paid insufficient attention to security and local welfare. Many Committees now ran small scale enterprises such as noodle stalls and hairdressers and older residents considered that these commercial ventures conflicted with the Committees' "proper" activities such as organizing evening security patrols or helping the elderly.

3.4.2 Furnishing Desire: The Urge To Decorate

It was apparent that many Shanghai people invested much of their energy and

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[28]Neighbourhood Residents' Committees are the lowest level of organization, each includes 500 to 1,300 households. Their main functions are mediation in quarrels between neighbours, to organize participation in elections for People's Representatives, the maintenance of cleanliness and sanitation, dissemination of propaganda and information, liaison with local police station (see Parish & Whyte 1984: 22-5).

[29]White (1981b: 51) notes that in 1946 the KMT set up a public security system through the grouping of households and streets. This was, itself, a revived version of the traditional **baojia** system.

financial resources in their homes. A Shanghai resident explained that "people place great importance upon their homes because the wider society has many things which oppress people (**yapo ren de dongxi**). The home is a small heaven (**xiao tiandi**). Everything outside their home is not their world (**jiali yiwai de bu shi tamen de shijie**)." This informant considered the historical context important in this retreat to the home, remarking that "previously outside the home people could not speak the truth and had no real friends with whom they could speak openly (**tanxin**). Outside one was fearful and without a sense of security." In these circumstances, the home offered at least a relatively greater degree of safety and security.

The stress upon the home as a "symbolic investment" was apparent in the craze for decorating and home furnishing. The resident noted above described an historical progression in this. He recalled that in the late Cultural Revolution many people began to engage in hobbies such as making small gasoline stoves. This was followed by a craze for making radios and sofas and then by home decoration. At first people made their own furniture. Recently higher incomes and a greater variety of consumer goods - fabrics, furniture and fittings - meant that items could be bought. He considered the emphasis upon the home as a kind of passive (**xiaoji**) opposition to society (**dui shehui de fankang**). However, he stressed that the individuals concerned would not explain it in this way. He associated this with Shanghai people's general lack of concern about things that do not directly concern them; some feel they cannot control (**guanbuliao**) things beyond the home, others are afraid of trouble (*po mo ve*/**pa mafan**) if they do. He concluded that "apart from their homes, people take no interest in anything else. The circle in which Chinese people live is smaller and smaller."

My own observations support this view. For most Shanghainese there were few avenues for fulfilment outside the home. The high population density and paucity of cultural facilities - from sports facilities to clubs and more engaged civil society - meant that for the most people "home [was] the main site of leisure and recreation" (Wang 1995: 168). Like Deborah Davis I found that this "inward gaze" was apparent in the way household interiors were generally "devoid of all connection to the state, the party, or the workplace" (1989: 95). Davis describes this as an explicit rejection of state intervention in private space and a popular resistance to state power. Although I accept that resistance to state intervention may be an *outcome* of these individual choices, I suggest - as the remarks of the informant above indicate - that this formulation exaggerates the degree of conscious agency involved.

I also consider that both outside observers who are looking for resistance to the state and my own informant overlook other features of the urge to decorate. Many home decorators expressed great pride in their achievements. Only a fully-fledged ethnography of home furnishing could do this topic justice but I make a few comments.[30] Geremie Barmé contrasts the home to the outside world and the **danwei** which are largely "unmalleable" and observes that "people with economic means are increasingly anxious to change their immediate environment, translating their visions of individual comfort and bourgeois life into their own apartments" (1992: 13.22). Even those with slender means sought to creatively inscribe their personality on their living space. One man, a true *bricoleur*, showed me the dining room, just large enough for a small table and chairs, he had constructed at the back of his flat. He proudly explained that all the items employed in its construction had been salvaged or obtained via "connections" and could discourse at length on the origin of each.

New technology was also facilitating the privatization of the home. Television watching alongside the core family group was the dominant leisure activity. In addition, in the summer of 1994 air-conditioning was installed in many households. In the old style housing high temperatures had a centrifugal effect forcing people out of their crowded stifling housing and onto the streets where they mingled with neighbours. Air-conditioning has precisely the reverse effect, it only functions when doors and windows are kept shut.

A significant policy shift which was promoting the privatization of the home and underpins the desire to furnish was the marketization of housing. Until the early 1990s most residents rented housing from their **danwei**.[31] **Danwei** generally allocated housing on the basis of a points system based upon various criteria such as number of people in the household, age, length of employment and rank. Rents had increased since the mid-1980s but were still low. A standard flat would be about 20¥ per month. However, since 1992-3 a city-wide policy began to marketize housing by encouraging occupants to buy their homes. In one "new village" in Yangpu district some 70% of residents had bought

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[30]Studies by Davis (1989) on household interiors in Shanghai and Laing (1989) on furniture arrangement and decoration indicate the potential for such an ethnography.

[31]Accommodation may be acquired in five basic ways - **danwei** allocation; city housing authority allocation; purchase; private rental; inheritance. Howe found that even after the 1956 socialization campaign some 40% of the city's housing stock was still privately owned (1968: 82). See Davis (1989: 96-8) on the allocation of housing in Shanghai.

their properties for just 250¥ per square metre.[32] Even when new housing was allocated, occupants now usually had to contribute a percentage of the cost (**jizi jianfang**).

A commercial housing market was also developing. Real estate agencies reemerged in the 1980s but only flourished after 1991. By 1993, there were as many as one thousand real estate agencies. A worker in a real estate agency remarked to me that "those who rely on salaries cannot buy the housing we sell." Their properties were sold mainly to those with overseas connections or who had earned money abroad, overseas Chinese, or wealthy businessmen such as the bosses of private enterprises. Housing had to be paid for in advance. Mortgages were still not available in late 1993. However, with the sale of public and **danwei** housing, a far more vigorous local housing market is likely to develop. As tenants became property owners they were more likely to invest resources - both financial and emotional - in their homes.

3.4.3 Changing Home Styles

During the reform era housing policy is again on the agenda, with a substantial increase in state investment in housing (see Chan 1994: 101-3). Figures cited in Davis (1989: 99) show that more new housing was built in Shanghai between 1980-86 (25.16 million m^2) than between 1950-80 (23.13 million m^2). Pellow (1993: 399) states that 40 million m^2 of dwelling space were constructed between 1979-89 and that by the early 1990s average living space in the city was 6.3 square metres.[33] A recent policy was to rehouse 31,808 families with less than 2.5 square metres living space per person (**tekunhu**) by the end of 1992.[34] A new goal for the end of 1994 was to rehouse all those with less than four square metres per person. A longer term goal is to double the amount of average living space in Shanghai by 2010 (Zhao 1993: 19).

The regeneration of large tracts of the city in the 1990s is rapidly changing the type of accommodation of many residents. Although the majority of Shanghai citizens still live in low-level housing such as the **shi kumen** - two storey houses built on a grid of lanes (see Pellow 1993: 401-9) - high-rise living is becoming much more prevalent. To highlight the significance of this shift it is necessary to compare the two types of living

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[32]This price did not convey full freehold rights. Occupants were "encouraged" to buy their properties by being told that their rents would increase dramatically if they refused.

[33]I am uncertain if these figures indicating a doubling of living space take account of the enlarging of Shanghai's administrative boundaries to include areas which have a lower population density.

[34]"Housing Plan Ahead of Schedule" SS 18 December 1992: 2.

"style" involved.

Parts of Shanghai with low-level high density housing, such as Nanshi, with its tiny houses and crowded alleyways are visibly very different to the new high-rise housing compounds. In **shi kumen** up to eight families may share one building, in which, generally, washing, toilet facilities and kitchen areas are communal. The cramped living conditions, along with strict controls over migration, facilitated a residential stability which Parish & Whyte argue allowed "rather traditional relations - *gemeinschaft*" to reappear in Chinese cities (355). Informants commented that although living conditions in Nanshi were poor, relationships between neighbours were good - they all knew each other and would help each other, for example, to look after children. On one occasion I visited Nanshi accompanied by a former resident who now lived in a high-rise flat. He said he felt nostalgic for life in Nanshi and missed the closeness of relationships between neighbours and the frequent visits they made with each other (**chuanmen**). He contrasted this situation with his new accommodation where there was little or no contact with neighbours.

In Hongkou district I visited the home of factory worker, his wife and eight year old son. The couple both worked in a large state glass factory. They lived in a high density residential area, just ten minutes walk from the factory, in pre-1949 housing built by the factory for its workers. Their house was in a small compound comprised of four households which shared toilet facilities and a common entrance onto the street. Most neighbours worked in the same factory and, like my host, had spent 10-11 years in Heilongjiang from 1967-78. The proximity of the work place, shared occupation and the experience in Heilongjiang gave this area a very special character with neighbours lives interwoven in diverse and complex ways.

I was invited to join the family for a meal. This was cooked at their home and on the coöker of the family next door. The large round dining table was borrowed from another neighbour. Their home consisted of two floors, a bedroom upstairs and a downstairs living room. The kitchen was outside the front door jutting out from the front of the house. It had two gas rings and a sink and was only big enough for one person. It had no space to prepare food, which was done on the plain cement floor of the downstairs room. In this compound interaction with neighbours was frequent and unavoidable. Privacy was limited, the exits and entrances of residents and visitors were all visible. Apart from the shared toilet facilities, front doors were almost side by side and since cooking areas were outside this provided many opportunities to engage in

conversation with neighbours (and to observe what they are eating).

Some six-storey buildings, often with shared washing and cooking areas, were built in the early 1950s. During the reform period true high-rise dwellings have been constructed. According to Pellow (1993: 410-1), China's indigenous elevator technology was too poorly developed to allow the building of high-rise blocks. The appropriate technology could not be imported until the reform era - an interesting spatial outcome of the "Open Door" policy. High-rise living is becoming the experience for an increasing number of Shanghai residents. It was apparent that this type of accommodation leads to a marked privatisation of experience.

Many informants told me that people preferred the new high-rise housing because it was **yi jia yi hu** - "one flat, one household", that is, each household had its own kitchen and toilet. I was told that this separation reduced the number of arguments between neighbours since "they may not even recognise each other and have no relationship to each other" (*va ta ga*/**bu da qiao** - literally "not build a bridge"). Families which were rehoused often moved to suburban areas of the city away from old friends, relatives and neighbours. One informant suggested that living in such accommodation decreased the prejudice against Subei people "since people will not even know if their neighbours are '*Gang bu nin*' (Subei people/**Jiangbeiren**)." However, informants also noted a negative side to high-rise dwelling. A retired man told me that house breaking has become more common. He considered a combination of high-rise accommodation and women going out to work - thereby leaving homes unoccupied during the day - as the key factors behind this increase. In the old, low-level housing neighbours all knew each other and would notice any strangers.

Differences between the two types of housing were very apparent. Residents of high-rise blocks live in far more privatized spaces. A fear of crime, allied with a decline of mutual neighbourhood surveillance furthers this process. The physical openness of many low-level homes contrasted with the multiple doors in high-rise dwellings. With the home an increasingly encloistered space it is interesting to note some of the "outside" objects which were incorporated into homes. Almost every home I visited had a glass-fronted cabinet which displayed items considered "attractive" (**haokan**) by the residents. These often included wedding gifts - sometimes in unopened boxes - and mementoes from places visited by the household or the gifts of friends. Most cabinets contained at least one foreign item, for example, a jar of *Nescafé* coffee, a bottle of "foreign" alcohol such French *XO Brandy*, even dried milk and in one case an unopened packet of *PG Tips* tea.

The presence of these foreign objects indicates both the "breach" in the Chinese wall and the extent to which such objects were considered prestigious.

In the evidence presented above there are aspects to both support and undermine David Harvey's thesis of the "urbanization of consciousness" (1989: 229-55). In Harvey's view with capitalism and urbanization the family "provides a haven to which individuals can withdraw from the complexities and dangers of urban life or from which they can selectively sample its pleasures and opportunities." My findings suggest that individuals were often forced to withdraw from the wider society when the Chinese state was at its most virulently anti-capitalist. Of the factors promoting this withdrawal in the (capitalist-orientated) reform era only new technologies such as television and air-conditioning, taken as products of a consumer economy, play the type of role Harvey suggests. However, set against this, communications technologies pull in the other direction and the commercializing economy presents new motives to extend contacts beyond the family (see following chapter). In the final section I will indicate the role of electronic media in both linking and severing the home from the "outside".

3.4.4 Alternative Places

During the reform era there has been a proliferation of locations which are neither work nor home places (see Wang 1995: 149-72). These include a variety of locations for conspicuous consumption which have emerged or re-emerged including karaoke bars, discotheques, night clubs, leisure centres and restaurants - during 1992 an average of ten new restaurants opened each day. The polarization of incomes has been matched by a polarization of leisure sites (Ibid: 167), many of the new places just mentioned are far beyond the price range of ordinary Shanghainese. In 1993, many health and social clubs opened, often charging extremely high prices. Private karaoke rooms, with rental prices often in excess of 500¥ for an evening, were also particularly exclusive locations. These places are indicative of rising inequalities and of the way money can now buy exclusivity. Many informants also considered such places as constitutive of the trend for money to exert a stronger influence than morality - it was widely believed that these places were the location for corruption and prostitution.

Privacy was a luxury in short supply for most Shanghainese. Before the late 1980s, for example, courting couples had few places to go. They would congregate on the Bund after dark or head for the parks where they faced competition from elderly men playing chess or taking their pet birds for a stroll. Unsurveyed spaces, dark corners, were

at a premium. With the commercialization of leisure there were now more possibilities for young people to find (relatively) secluded places. For instance, a trend in many Shanghai cinemas was to provide only double seats. In 1990, many cinemas tickets were under one *yuan*. The new double seats were 10-20¥, to which cost must be added the price of expensive drinks and snacks brought round by a waitress service. This seating facilitated a privatisation of experience in a semi-public space. The proliferation of dimly lit coffee houses with highly priced snacks and cover charges was another example of this trend.

Reopened Christian churches offered a quite different type of place. An elderly churchgoer described the church to me as "very different to the rest of society." He commented that, for instance, "when people leave the church it is quiet and orderly, completely different from the way people try to grab a seat on the buses (**qiang weizi**), not caring if there is an elderly person or a woman with a baby.

These few examples of new, alternative places highlights the increasing diversity and fragmentation of social life in contemporary Shanghai. In the case of the church, my informant stressed that it was an "orderly" place in contrast to the disorder "outside". Karaoke and nightclubs, by contrast, were more morally ambiguous places, which some described as "chaotic". Other important sites included restaurants and shops, the types of consumption these were believed to involve are examined in chapter five.

3.5 Connecting Lines

In this section I focus upon connecting "lines". I commence with some observations on the commuting lines mentioned in the quote "two points and a line". I then investigate more abstract types of "line" including electronic connections. I highlight conjunctions between access to different types of line and social status. I also indicate the way in which electronic media can both create, fragment and/or transgress boundaries.

3.5.1 Commuting Lines

Residents who commuted to work often told me that this journey - it could take three and a half hours to cross the city - took up far more energy than they ever expended at work. Most citizens travelled by bus or bicycle - there were some four million bicycles and 40,000 motored bicycles in 1993.[35] City buses were frequently so tightly packed with passengers that the doors could not be closed. It was notable that this degree of

[35]Figures from Xu 1993: 6-18.

crowdedness was constitutive of some informants' notions of Shanghaineseness. For instance, a young library worker told me that she felt a **moqi** ("tacit agreement") when travelling by bus, a shared feeling that she and her fellow passengers were all in this together. Notions of Shanghainese identity extended to "correct" ways of standing on cramped buses. I was often assured that Shanghainese ingenuity had designed the most efficient way to stand on these - those who did not know these unwritten rules were **xiangxiaren**, rural outsiders.

The number of motor vehicles was rising rapidly. In 1993, there were 300,000 motor vehicles in the urban district - including some 25,000 taxis. In 1993, it cost 40-50¥ to cross the city by taxi. There were still few private cars, during seventeen months in Shanghai I never met anybody, apart from taxi drivers, who owned a car. Congested roads and minimal parking spaces undoubtedly deterred the minority who were wealthy enough from buying cars. Despite this there was a marked increase in the number of expensive foreign cars on Shanghai's streets. The largest proportion of these cars were said to belong to foreign businessmen and companies, with others owned by "Party and government organizations, State-owned enterprises and institutes, and even some private businessmen."[36] Access to a private car was widely conceived of as a mark of elite social status.

3.5.2 Electronic "Lines"

At an exhibition of pictures by children in the Shanghai Art Exhibition Centre for Children's Day on June 1, 1993 a picture by a nine year old caught my attention. It shows a child with a mobile phone and above him a representation of a goddess in the heavens also with a mobile phone. A caption shows the message the boy is giving the goddess: "Goddess of Rain, on May 9,[37] please don't let it rain.

No matter which means of transport one uses, physically moving from one place to another consumes both time and energy. Electronic media, as the young artist clearly realized, "make possible new forms of social interaction, modify or undermine old forms of interaction, create new foci and new venues for action and interaction" (Thompson 1990: 225). Various theorists have written on the way electronic media separates social interaction from physical locale (e.g. Meyrowitz 1985, Thompson 1990, Fitzgerald 1991). In this section I outline the role and impact of three types of machine - the telephone,

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[36]"Luxury Car Market Revs Up" SS 14 May 1993: 10.

[37]The day of the opening ceremony for the East Asian Games.

pager, and mobile phone before concluding with mention of the impact of television and boundaries in Shanghai.

In Shanghai the type of communications device a person had access to was often a reasonable indication of their social status. At the lowest level were those who must rely upon public phones. These phones (**chuanhu dianhua**) usually serve several dozen households. Calls are taken and made from small booths staffed by elderly local residents. Incoming callers leave their name and number and one of the booth's staff emerge from the hut and summon the person sought with the aid of a megaphone.

Installation of a home phone ensured a much greater degree of privacy, although the size of many dwellings meant that family members may be able to overhear calls. The use of a private phone and the privatization of experience it brings has only become possible during the reform era. At first, only those with "connections" and/or status could have phones installed. A teacher told me that her phone was installed in the early 1980s "soon after phones were opened (**kaifang**)." An ex-student employed as a telephone engineer had installed a phone for her - an instance of a personal connection - a type of "line" in itself (see following chapter), providing a telephone "line". By the early 1990s phone installation was available to those who could afford the expense. In 1992, it cost about 3,500¥ to install a phone - a local newspaper pointed out that this was the equivalent of a year's salary for many people.[38] A bimonthly charge of 30-40¥ allowed up to sixty free calls within Shanghai.

Telephones make the use of connections (**guanxi**) much more convenient. A retired teacher who retained an extensive network with former students and colleagues told me that his bimonthly phone bill was between 200-300¥. In using **guanxi** the actual connection one requires is often reached indirectly via another or several other people. Negotiating such a chain by physically going from place to place would be extremely time and energy consuming. In my own research the telephone was a key research tool and I used it to pass along the links of sometimes very elaborate chains.

In the previous chapter I described an instance where the installation of private phones had reinvigorated what may be construed as "traditional links" between urban and rural relatives. The telephone can also "reinvent" traditional rituals. For example, at Spring Festival people should visit relatives and the streets are thronged with people carrying large round cakes and bottles of alcohol. However, one can only visit so many people and the telephone enables these ritual "calls" (**baifang**) to be made from home.

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[38]"Chinese Pay Dearly To Have Phones Installed in Homes" CD 13 March 1993: 3.

An element of competition appears to creep into this - it was considered best to phone others before they phone you. This competitive reciprocity may follow over to the following year.

Since the early 1990s pagers had become common. A young woman who described herself as a "broker" (*dzi ka* - **qianke**) told me that for her the pager is "an opportunity (**jihui**)", "a line (**xian**)" and "a route (**lu**)".[39] She had a **danwei** but rarely went there. Moreover, colleagues there would not pass on any messages for her. A young saleswoman, who had been issued with a pager by her boss, felt differently about her pager. The description of her new pager's effect upon her life seemed to liken it to a kind of electronic tagging device. Soon after she had been issued with it I asked her what difference it had made. She replied that she felt "caught" (**zhuahao**) and "lacking freedom" (**bu ziyou**). She added that in contemporary Shanghai communication (**lianxi**) links of this type had become very important, before it had not mattered. She explained that this change was due to increasing commercialization in Shanghai and a new sense that "time is money". These two contrasting views on pagers show the ambiguity of this device. For one informant it was a source of opportunities, for the other an infringement upon her personal space, an invisible line which bound her. These examples demonstrate the way in which the global phenomenon of "time-space compression has not been experienced by all in the same way, whilst some initiate its operation others are constrained by it" (Carter *et al*: viii).

Informants recognized that information had become much more important in the reform era. In pre-reform rural China, Elisabeth Croll (1994) describes a situation where local cadres acted as "gatekeepers" for information, a resource which under-pinned their own power. In urban China I doubt that the state ever achieved the same degree of "revolutionary enclosure" (1994: 116-34). However, information was limited and access to it strictly controlled - there was primarily a vertical flow of information within units controlled by the state. As I showed in chapters one and two, during the reform era the state's near monopoly over the control of information has been fundamentally undermined. The new stress upon communication devices is both indicative of and contributes to the proliferation and dissemination of information. In Shanghai, there was clear evidence of the way in which when people are connected electronically rather than by geographical space, horizontal rather than vertical communities are created (Morley & Robins 1989: 25-6).

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[39]This terminology, with its interesting contiguity of terms, is discussed in the next chapter.

An advanced form of pager - a **xinxiji** ("information machine") - could store simple messages and provide information such as the latest share prices. However, the most prestigious means of communication was the mobile phone. In local discourse a new stereotype had emerged of the businessman wearing a stylish suit, mobile phone clutched in his hand - a symbol of his power and ability to make things happen. The mobile phone market in Shanghai was opened-up to competing companies in 1988. At that time there were just over two hundred mobile phones in Shanghai. The 10,000th mobile phone was issued in December 1992.[40] The official name for mobile phones is a direct translation from English - **yidong dianhua** - but in everyday speech they were **dageda** - "big brother big". Informants suggested that this term originated in Hong Kong as a title of triad gang leaders. This genealogy, whether real or imagined, is indicative of the power and prestige which was associated with possession of a **dageda**. A company boss may issue an employee with a pager - in 1993 they cost around 2,000¥. However, a mobile phone cost 20-30,000¥. As one informant commented, "if somebody has a **dageda** you know he's rich, because the most a boss (**laoban**) would give somebody is a pager."

Newspaper reports wrote about a "mobile phone stratum" (**dageda jieceng**). A young office worker described the increasing disparity between rich and poor as Shanghai's most serious problem. He portrayed this as a difference "between those who lead very hard (**ku**) lives in poor accommodation and the few who have mobile phones." These new technologies enabled their possessors to cross boundaries. At the same time they also created new boundaries both in the sense of the wealth they embodied and the access to opportunities they provided which were denied to those who lacked them. A rich share dealer I met had both a pager and mobile phone. When I asked him why he had both he explained simply that information (**xinxi**) was very important to him. Mobile phones and pagers were both indicative of, and made possible, a quite different lifestyle from the "two points and a line" of ordinary workers (**shangban de**). Following this indigenous description it could be said that these new devices merged the two points into one with multiple lines radiating to and from it. The user is at the centre of his or her own network and incorporated into the networks of others rather than being daily conveyor-belted from home to work and back.

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[40]Figures in "**Hushang 'Dageda' Jiazu Kewang Zisun Mantang**" XMWB 16 January 1993: 2, and "Milestone for Mobile Phones" SS 18 December 1993: 2.

3.5.3 Home Boundaries in the Electronic Age

The electronic media of radio and television had entered the homes of most Shanghainese. Since the 1980s, watching television had become the dominant leisure activity in the city. I take it as axiomatic that "television, and video, (along with the computer), are major agents in our understanding of time and space, and they contribute to the trans-formation of these categories in everyday life" (Brunsdon 1989: 123). As I showed in chapter two, the material conveyed via these media has the capacity to facilitate both the construction and disassembling of identities at diverse levels. For instance, they sever traditional links between physical and social place; instead of, or alongside, place-related identities new types of identities can develop (cf. Fitzgerald 1991).

The effects of electronic media on the boundaries of the home are ambiguous. At one level television, radio and home telephones fragment society into households by furthering a process "in which leisure time has increasingly been located within the home, as opposed to within the public sphere" (Morley & Silverstone 1990: 38). In China, the development of the home as a cloistered environment may be even more attenuated in view of the impact of past political campaigns, the spread of high-rise dwelling and growing fear of crime which I have outlined. However, at another level these media collapse time and space and purvey global images and locate Shanghainese within a global and national media world. In this way broadcasting spans the private and public spheres through, for example, the domestication of standard national time (Scannell 1988). Additionally, the sitting room becomes the place where "the global meets the local" (Morley 1991); once public events now "occur" in the living room. Paradoxically, as these media promoted a separation from neighbours, they joined viewers with (or, at least, enabled them to gaze upon) people, places and events they would otherwise never encounter - distance and intimacy becoming increasingly disjoined.

Concluding Remarks

In the first part of this chapter I outlined significant changes which were taking place in the cityscape of Shanghai. Important points in this section include the widespread belief that Shanghai's physical environment had changed little in the decades from 1949 until, at least, the mid-1980s. In the 1990s, profound physical ruptures and dislocations are re-constructing the "face" of the city. A theme of this thesis is to show ways in which identities are contingent and contextual with a wide range of cross-cutting, possible identifications. In the second section I continued this theme with an examination of ways

in which places and people in Shanghai were assigned to an "upper" or a "lower" status. The attribution of qualities and identities to people in (or from) different parts of the city provides further strands of complexity. The persistence and apparent reinforcing of these identifications during the Maoist era demonstrates the way in which socio-economic policies of that time often operated to produce consequences in direct opposition to the ideals rhetorically espoused.

In the third and fourth sections, I outlined ways in which work and home places are changing in the reform era. I argue that there appears to be a trend for **danwei** to become less enclosed and bounded and for the home to become an increasingly privatized, cloissonéed sphere. A combination of factors reinforced the home as a place of refuge including the impact of past political campaigns, technological and architectural changes, and the sense that rising crime is making Shanghai a less ordered and a less safe place. On this point it is worth noting that Western approaches which tend to depict China as authoritarian, in need of greater democracy and political freedom often overlook the quite different cultural background in China. The dominant view amongst my informants was that Communist Party rhetoric on, for example, controlling crime and corruption was correct. However, they believed either that the Party was too entangled in these activities to control them or that it was too weak, too lacking in authority to control them.

In the final section I highlighted ways in which differential means of transcending space not only located people within different spatial habitats but was also often indicative of social status. When analyzing social differentiation in contemporary Shanghai, rather than use the terminology of "class", it may be more appropriate to refer as local people do, for example, to a car-using "stratum" or a mobile phone-using "stratum". These are clear instances of the way in which, in contemporary society, consumption of products can be used to ascribe identities. I have shown too some of the ambiguous effects of electronic media, as they serve to make "connections" easier and new types of links possible but at the same time create new boundaries and new types of exclusion.

Chapter 4 Trust in an Uncivil Society - Personal Relations in Contemporary Shanghai

In the 1950s people helped each other. In the 1960s people struggled against each other. In the 1970s people cheated each other.

Western theorists of modernization such as Anthony Giddens have often suggested that one consequence of modernization and urbanization is that a reliance upon face-to-face, particularistic relationships will be replaced by a stress upon universalistic, credentialized relationships. Indigenous discourses in Shanghai and my own experience as a researcher in that city sharply contradict such an assertion. An overwhelming impression was that particularistic ties (**guanxi**) were considered an essential requirement to creating opportunities and attaining positive outcomes in diverse aspects of everyday life. Indeed, Shanghainese often described this as an increasingly prominent feature of life in Shanghai. In this chapter I outline indigenous "histories" which described changes in human relations over the last five decades. Key themes of these commentaries were a decline in shared values of morality and an increasing lack of trust in human relationships beyond key significant others. These developments were described predominantly as a consequence of past political campaigns or as the outcome of current social and economic reforms or a combination of these factors. In a society where people believed they can rely only upon those they "know" I examine the bases of trust which individuals depended upon.

There are compelling reasons for studying personal relations in contemporary Shanghai.[1] It is a topic which both indigenous and outside observers remark upon as important. Chinese people frequently assert that human relations are of key importance in their society whilst Mayfair Yang writes that "the art of **guanxi** strikes the outside observer as a central feature of Chinese society" (1986: 24). In addition, the state has actively sought to mould human relations and behaviour through social and economic policies, education, political campaigns, laws and coercion. From the mid-1950s significant socio-economic changes included the development of the planned economy based upon the socialization of labour and the work unit (**danwei**) system which encapsulated workers to a considerable degree in discrete, vertically structured organizations. According to Parish and Whyte state policies had produced "some dramatic

[1]My study builds upon the approaches of researchers such as Vogel (1965), Jacobs (1982), Gold (1985), Yang (1986, 1989, 1994), and King (1991) who have examined human relations in Chinese societies.

changes in relations with neighbours, friends, workmates, and kin since 1949" (1984: 333). Since the late 1970s, and especially during the 1990s, far reaching socio-economic changes have been implemented in Shanghai. These range from the promotion of private enterprise to the establishment of money, share and commodity markets. The relatively clear-cut, vertical structures have been undermined and residents face both new opportunities and risks in an overall environment where the future drift of national political and economic policy remain uncertain. All of these factors make it particularly interesting to investigate some of the ways in which the urban residents I encountered discussed interpersonal relations.

In the first instance I hope to provide a nuanced and evocative ethnographic account of personal relations and bases of trust in Shanghai. This study also provides the opportunity to relate my findings to theories proposed by Western social scientists such as Anthony Giddens and Georg Simmel. The opening section of this chapter examines some of the theories on modern, urban society proposed by Giddens and Simmel. The next section highlights the way local people described human relationships as both a central feature of their lives and of being Chinese. Attention is drawn to the widespread belief that particularistic relationships (**guanxi**) had become an increasingly vital factor in determining one's life chances since the late Cultural Revolution (1966-76). In a third section I outline indigenous "histories" which described changes in human relationships over the past five decades in Shanghai. In particular, in Shanghai I used a well known local rhyme - which depicted interpersonal relationships and morality as having deteriorated since the 1950s - as a sounding board to instigate and provoke discussion on this topic. My exploration in this chapter includes comments on the way the current marketization of the economy was often described as having a deleterious impact upon human relationships and morality. In a fourth section I explore discourses on various bases of trust which underpinned the efficacy of particularistic relationships. I conclude with a re-examination of Giddens and Simmel's theories in the light of ethnographic data from Shanghai. Included in this are ways in which trust in the old abstract systems of comradeship and the Communist Party has been replaced by trust in one's self and new abstract systems such as "economic laws".

4.1 Western Theories of Human Relations in "Modern", Urban Society

Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991) has paid attention to trust in the context of contrasting "pre-modern" and "modern" societies. His arguments are complex and I distil

elements which are cognate to my own concerns. Giddens describes trust in pre-modern societies as vested in localized contexts such as kinship and "the local community as a place" (1990: 102). By contrast, trust in modern societies is vested in disembedded abstract systems and, through a "transformation of intimacy" (1991: 6), personal relationships - especially those of friendship and sexual intimacy. Abstract systems include: i) symbolic tokens - "media of exchange that have standard value" (1991: 244) - such as money and ii) expert systems - "systems of expert knowledge, of any type, depending on rules of procedure transferable from individual to individual (243) - such as medicine and law. Personal relationships are "pure relationships" created voluntarily. Important aspects of such relationships are that they are "not anchored in external conditions of social or economic life" but focused on intimacy, dependent upon mutual disclosure and "sought only for what the relationship can bring to the partners involved" (1991: 88-98).

In this chapter I use the English term "trust" rather than the Chinese **xinren** since both terms share a similar range of meanings. "Trust" like **xinren**, has connotations of confidence, dependability and faith and Giddens formulation that trust "always carries the connotation of reliability in the face of contingent outcomes, whether these concern the actions of individuals or the operation of systems" (1990: 33) applies equally to **xinren**. A key function of trust is to reduce or minimize risk and danger and to maximize ontological security. Ontological security "refers to the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action. A sense of the reliability of persons and things, so central to the notion of trust, is basic to feelings of ontological security" (1990: 92).

I will suggest that while Giddens' notions on trust provide useful insights the fact that they are grounded in various ethnocentric assumptions undermines their utility. This conclusion is partly bound up with the term used in the title "uncivil society". In part, I use this term as a reaction to the burgeoning Sinological literature during the 1990s on "civil society" in China. Although in Shanghai, as elsewhere in China there are clearly what Gordon White (1993) describes as "tendencies" towards the emergence of a civil society I will not directly address this topic. However, given that trust plays a key role in associations my study focuses on factors which may inhibit or promote, and also affect the contours of, such civil society as may develop. In this respect "uncivil society" refers to frequent indigenous comments on the lack of trust, unity, and politeness between strangers and also the lack of universally accepted moral values. Taken together these constitute a distinct

lack of civic sense.

Georg Simmel (1990) contrasts the difference in personal relations between a traditional and a monetized economy. He argues that in a traditional economy a subject is involved in personalized relationships with a limited number of people. Above all, the subject is bound to a particular master, a relationship Simmel describes as "the real antipode of freedom" (299). In a monetized economy two main developments occur. Firstly, there is a "plurality of economic dependencies" (297). Secondly, these relations are increasingly depersonalized and devoid of "all the imponderables of more emotional relations" (288). Simmel perceives both positive and negative aspects of a monetized economy. On the positive side, "the money economy... affords room for a maximum of liberty" (295). Money makes the individual more independent, s/he can sell his/her labour to whom s/he pleases, buy the achievements of others' labour and choose which other forms of association to enter into. This freedom also has a negative side. There is a danger that there is "freedom *from* something, not liberty *to do* something" (402). Moreover, Simmel considers that objects have a "direction-giving significance" (404). Once objects (and presumably personal relations too) are detached by money they lose this significance. In its wake this may bring the danger of instability, disorder and dissatisfaction.

I consider that contemporary Shanghai offers a useful field site for investigating some of Simmel's ideas. In certain senses the pre-reform economy could be depicted as possessing many of the features of a non-monetized economy. In particular, workers had little choice over where they could be employed and many of their benefits such as housing, medical services and pensions were all bound up with the place of employment. In addition, from my own research and that of others (e.g. Walder 1986) it seems that workers were often tied into personalized relationships with specific bureaucratic gatekeepers. In recent years Shanghai's economy has become increasingly "monetized": there are now possibilities for workers to choose and change their own place of employment; the scale and scope of services offered by work units has tended to decrease; wages have risen and with the legalization of private enterprise far more services are now available for money.

4.2 Shanghainese Representations of Human Relations

Shanghai citizens contrasted social life in China with that in "the West" claiming that China was a "human feelings nation" (**renqing guojia**) in which interpersonal

relationships (**ren yu ren zhi jian de guanxi**) and the "flavour of human feelings" (**renqingwei**) were of especial importance. In the West, I would be told, human relationships are comparatively distant and cold. More positively, it is widely believed that in the West treatment of others is dependent upon universal values, fairness and impartiality whereas in China the stress upon **renqingwei** means that connections (**guanxi**), background (**beijing**), backstage support (**houtai**) and backing (**kaoshan**) are paramount. A common complaint was that in China, ranging from control of the state to individual work units, there was rule by men (**renzhi**) and not by law (**fazhi**). This perception was encapsulated in the saying: don't bother about the official head of the county, worry about who is actually in charge (**bu pa xianguan, jiu pa xian guan**). The reliance upon face-to-face relationships was evident in Shanghainese use of the term **renshi** - "to know somebody" - to describe a connection. **Renshi** also means "understand" and "recognise" - criteria which must be fulfilled to enable a basis of trust.

Traditional Confucian philosophy stressed the correct ordering of human relationships emphasizing the existence and maintenance of distance between distinct, predominantly hierarchically ordered, moral categories of people.[2] Although there were, for instance, injunctions to place righteousness above family loyalty (**dayi mie qin**) in practice filiality (**xiao**) was considered to have been more important than observance of laws. In his pre-1949 study of Chinese society, Fei Xiaotong wrote that "the Chinese pattern of social organization embraces no ethical concepts that transcend specific types of human relationships" (1992: 72). When the Communist Party took power in 1949, it sought to promote universalistic values such as comradeship and "serving the people" which would supplant and supersede particularistic moral values such as nepotism which were denounced as "feudal".[3] The attempt to spread the use of "comrade" (**tongzhi** - "common will") which derives from **zhitong daohe** meaning "cherish the same ideals and follow the same path" (CED 1988: 903) may be construed as emblematic of this project. It is notable that terms of address have now completed a full circle and reverted to those used before 1949. The terms "Mr" (**xiansheng**), "Mrs" (**taitai**), and "Miss" (**xiaojie**) are being revived whilst use of **tongzhi** is mainly limited to political contexts and older intellectuals.

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[2]Hugh Baker (1979: 15-16) outlines the corollaries of this for the ideal family structure in "traditional" China.

[3]Madsen (1984) provides a comprehensive account of the introduction and ultimate disintegration of the "new government-sponsored paradigms of morality" in a Cantonese village.

4.2.1 "Connections" (**guanxi**)

In previous chapters I stressed the preponderance of walls and boundaries in Shanghai, a factor which is closely related to the cellular or "honeycomb pattern" (Shue 1988: 50) of social organization. It was widely believed that going through the back door (**zou houmen**) by using personal connections (**guanxi**) was the only effective way to surmount or negotiate these boundaries (see Walder 1986: 181-5). A local sociologist remarked to me that it is very difficult for both Chinese and foreigners to conduct research in China because "there are many walls and curtains." The ways in which I was able to meet people and the kinds of networks I used to negotiate these boundaries are indicative of the nature of **guanxi** in Chinese society.[4] It is important to bear in mind that apart from the party-state bureaucracy and work units there are few organizations in urban China. During 1992-4 Shanghai lacked most of the myriad advisory and information services and voluntary associations which are found in Western cities, there was little even in the way of organized leisure activities. In addition, banks were only at the preliminary stages of offering credit facilities to individual customers. In many senses this resembles Sun Yat Sen's description of China as "a plate of loose sand". Recourse to **guanxi** was considered important or essential in diverse spheres including finding work, gaining promotion, obtaining housing, medical treatment or a place on popular university courses and in any interaction with bureaucracy. A man in his sixties remarked to me that "without knowing somebody, you cannot do anything" (*va ning ge nin, sa si ti bɛ va ho*/**bu renshi ren, shenme shiqing banbudao**). The reverse also held: "If you have connections, there is nothing you cannot do." The overriding ethos can be summed up remarkably well by the English expression: "It's not what you know, it's who you know." Another informant considered the recourse to **guanxi** a case of **bi shang Liangshan** - be compelled to do something wrong through force of circumstances. Without "knowing" somebody not only would people's attitude be poor but any requests for assistance would be unsuccessful. More generally, he felt unable to trust people he did not "know" remarking that "one cannot believe what Chinese people say" (*Zong ku nin gang e wu, va su su*/**Zhongguoren shuohua, bu suanshu**). The efficacy of using **guanxi** rather than relying upon appeals to public morality or universal values was made clear to me in the comments of a worker in a neighbourhood cultural centre. He remarked, "it's easy for me to get things done as my 'roads' are open (**luzi hen tong**). I rely upon personal connections (**pin siren guanxi**) to get things done. By contrast, the neighbourhood committee leaders just issue orders and

[4] I expand on this topic in the Introduction to my thesis.

people take aversion to this. I have friendly relations (**jiaoqing**) with various people and this is important."

At this point it is important to provide some explanation of the term **guanxi**. Gold restricts **guanxi** to instrumentalism and describes it as a "power relationship" (1985: 660). However, my understanding is that whilst **guanxi** may be used by people for instrumental aims and may contain relations of this kind - the patron-client relationship is a type of **guanxi** - nonetheless the term has a wider range of referants than this. **Guanxi** may be translated as relationships, particularistic ties, connections or connectedness. The meaning of **guanxi** is context related. It may have negative, neutral or positive connotations; it may involve a power relationship or describe one of equality. Since no single English term encompasses the range of meanings of **guanxi** I follow Gold (1985), Jacobs (1982) and Yang (1986) and leave this term untranslated.

A rich vocabulary is associated with the use of **guanxi**. Some terms build upon it such as "pull connections" (**la guanxi**) and "network of connections" (**guanxi wang**). Other terms alluded to the basis which underlies the use of connections such as **tuo renqing** - to gain one's ends through pull (literally "rely upon human feeling/sentiment"), **song renqing** - to give somebody a gift ("give human feelings") and **qian renqing** - to be indebted to someone ("owe human feelings") (see Yang 1957 on reciprocity in social relations in China). The use of connections was often described using a transport metaphor of "roads" (**lu** or **luzi**). A **lu** is a road or route via which some aim may be attained. A person whose roads are "wide" (**cu**) and "clear" (**tong**) stands a good chance of attaining their goal. If one meets with some obstacle (**zhangai**) it may be necessary to take a less direct route and use the backdoor (**zou houmen**). The backdoor may be opened (**kai houmen**) by a connection (**guanxi**). If this connection is reliable (**ying** - hard) this may be easy, if not it may be necessary to "surface the road" (**pulu**) using gifts or money.[5] In contemporary Shanghai, those made redundant are told to "find their own way out" of unemployment (**ziji zhao chulu**). **Guanxi** is the key to such roads. If one lacks **guanxi** one must "walk the roads" (**zou zou luzi**), that is, try to find some. Social connections are also called **menlu** - literally "the entrance to roads" and one can "search for" (**zhao**) such connections. Significantly, one informant described her mobile phone as a **lu** and an "opportunity". Theatrical metaphors are also common in the discourse on connections.

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[5]In Shanghai, the term **shaoxiang** (burn incense) is also used. In the same way as incense is burned before heavenly gatekeepers, the bodhissatva (**pusa**), to secure their aid and support so gifts are laid before more earthly "**pusa**" to achieve this end.

For instance, it is important to have **beijing** - background/backdrop - and **houtai** - backstage or backstage supporters whilst those with power (and, therefore, much **guanxi**) can **beihou caozong** - manipulate from behind the scenes. **Guanxi** is also implicated with notions of face (**mianzi**) (on face see Hu 1944). Face involves notions of prestige and may be described as a type of "social capital" (Smart 1993: 402). A person with many connections is said to have "a large face" (**mianzi hen da**). More specifically to Shanghai, the term *pa dü* (**paitou**) "style" may be used in this context. A person with many connections has *pa dü*. If one relies upon such a person's connections one may say "I'm relying on your 'style'" (*nu zao nong ge pa dü*/**wo kao nide paitou**).

4.2.2 The Flourishing of **Guanxi**

Official statements decry **guanxi** as a "hangover from feudalism". Another, more convincing, explanation for the recourse to **guanxi** is scarcity of goods in a system with bureaucratic allocation of resources. However, this explanation does not explain why the use of **guanxi** appears to have proliferated since the late 1960s nor its current epidemic proportions. My findings suggest that unanticipated consequences of actions by the state have been instrumental in undermining the universalistic bases of trust which their rhetoric promoted and have thereby fostered an environment in which **guanxi** can flourish. Before turning to local "histories" on this development it is worth noting that not all citizens were included within the rhetoric or abstract system of comradeship. Although the notion of comradeship exhorted equality of treatment among comrades some categories of person, such as "landlords", "rightists" and "capitalist roaders" were excluded from this circle. Even amongst "comrades" some were more equal than others. This non-universal view of human nature remains enshrined in the current (standard) Chinese-English Dictionary which states "different classes have different feelings" (1988: 572) and "in class society there is no human nature above classes" (573).

People I spoke with suggested various reasons for the increased resort to **guanxi**. A man in his sixties observed that during the Maoist era "although cadres may be evil, leftist, inflexible and stubborn they were comparatively honest (**lianjie**). Before the Cultural Revolution things were very rigid and everything was done according to political criteria such as class status." He felt that since 1976 "there are no set criteria, no dogma (**jiaotiao**). This flexibility (**linghuoxing**) along with a limited legal framework has permitted **guanxi** use to flourish." Another informant, a man in his fifties, told me that during the early Cultural Revolution "people dared not use the backdoor." Extensive resort

to the use of **guanxi** appears to have reappeared especially during the latter part of the Cultural Revolution (see also Hertz 1994: 83-90).[6] Like Hertz, I also found that the most significant motive for resort to **guanxi** at that time had been by parents attempting to have their "sent-down" children transferred back to Shanghai (85, note 42). This desperate wish on the part of tens of thousands of Shanghai households coincided with (and, perhaps, contributed to) a weakening of the structures of social control and surveillance.

The flourishing of recourse to **guanxi** may also be related to changes in the economy since the death of Mao. Ezra Vogel reports how in Canton from the late 1970s "**guanxi** blossomed to play a new instrumental role for entrepreneurs taking advantage of market opportunities" (1989: 405-9). In the 1990s especially the cellular, vertical socio-economic structures have been considerably weakened both by an internal inability to meet workers' demands and the emergence of alternative sources to meet these demands. A university professor commented to me that "the commodity economy by its very nature requires **guanxi**." In a society where bases of trust between strangers are extremely limited, it is inevitable that people turn to those they "recognize". Many residents considered that Shanghai's commercializing economy was creating new opportunities. However, a common belief was that access to these opportunities was limited to those with power and the ability to pull **guanxi** (to have power is also to have **guanxi**), especially if they also had ability (**nengli**). At the highest levels were those who operate within the **guanxi**-power nexus provided by military backing. A man in his fifties remarked, "in the West people say that time is money, in China **guanxi** is money." In Shanghai there were popular stereotypes of government officials with "two-sided name cards" who utilized contacts made in their official capacity for personal enrichment - one side has their official status, the other their company affiliation. Retired high-ranking cadres (**gaogan**) were often involved in trading companies or as ubiquitous "advisors". Such activities could easily blur into the type of official sleaze and corruption (**guandao**) which, in Shanghai at least, was the prime target of demonstrators in 1989.

An arena where the potential for **guanxi** had proliferated was in job selection and career opportunities. Career mobility, especially for the young and well-educated, had expanded greatly since Deborah Davis's description of Shanghai's workforce in the 1980s as "highly immobile" (1990: 86). Since the mid-1980s graduates from Shanghai educational establishments had been allowed to find their own jobs instead of being

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[6]My findings are remarkably similar to those of Mayfair Yang (1994: 154-9) who conducted research in Beijing in the early 1980s.

assigned to a **danwei**. Graduating students used **guanxi** to learn about opportunities and liaise with **danwei**. Although there were now job advertisements in the local press and various job markets students believed that the best jobs went to those with connections. Under the old system party officials were responsible for making this choice which reduced the potential loci for **guanxi**. By 1992-4, students told me that only those who lacked ability and were without **guanxi** were still assigned jobs by the state. Alan Smart (1993) discusses the notion of **guanxi** as social capital and in Shanghai a correlation was made between the amount of **guanxi** somebody had and their opportunities (**jihui**). For students engaged in finding employment an important criterion in selecting a particular job was the potential opportunities it would provide to make new and further **guanxi**.

Allowing graduates to find their own jobs contributed to the declining influence of the party by reducing the power of its members as bureaucratic gatekeepers. Two bright students I knew were advised by their teachers to join the Communist Party because "it would help in their job assignments." Both ignored this advice and found their own jobs. The devolution of power to enterprise heads also gave them greater freedom to engage in (or be ensnared by) nepotism, especially in state enterprises where, as one informant pointed out, "it's all the state's money." Mitigating against such nepotism was increased enterprise responsibility for profits and losses. In some instances economic liberalization provided equality of opportunity beyond **guanxi**. A newly appointed worker in a Beijing state trading company was one of 20 chosen from over 600 applicants for a job in its new Shanghai branch. She observed that usually jobs were given to those with **guanxi** who "open the backdoor" rather than simply those with ability. However, in this case the company had no established organization in Shanghai and, therefore, no people with **guanxi**.

Personal connections were considered essential to business operations. In one instance I was acquainted with two young men rented a shop counter and set up a small business selling men's trousers. Every step of this procedure involved personal connections: for example, locating a suitable site, obtaining supplies of merchandise and finding two shop assistants. One of the partners took long term sick leave from his work unit. He explained that he "recognised" a doctor who would sign the relevant sick note. Clearly one role of **guanxi** in this enterprise was to provide information about commercial opportunities. During the Maoist era information sources were strictly controlled. In the emerging socialist market economy, information has become increasingly valuable and sources of it elaborated far beyond the vertically organized state structure. As Elisabeth

Croll (1994: 116-34) argues, there is a close association between information and agency. Amongst share dealers, for instance, information was frequently cited as the key to success and the main source of information were contacts. There was a strong incentive to build up extensive networks of persons whose knowledge could be trusted. A striking contrast I noted was the successful share dealers' reliance upon numerous phone calls as opposed to the crowds which gathered on the pavements outside various dealing halls from the time the market closes at 4pm often until midnight.

In recent years public relations had emerged as a new course of study and rapidly become very popular. This development indicates that new types of relationships were coming into existence. Shanghai's commercializing economy also provided scope for many types of brokers and middlemen. Alan Smart (1993), for instance, found that many Hong Kong entrepreneurs utilize or construct social ties with individuals to facilitate the process of investment in the PRC and act as brokers. These people fulfil the same type of role as compradors in pre-1949 China. Before the reform era **danwei** had a vertical, hierarchical structure and relations between lower levels in two **danwei** went up vertical ladders to the leaders, then across and down. Exceptions to this were **lianluoyuan**, (liaison personnel) who operated on behalf of state **danwei** as middlemen between wholesale and retail units. Individuals could also use personal connections, although the scope for this was limited. In the early 1990s there was now a much greater opportunity for connections to be made horizontally. Indeed, one informant suggested that **danwei** leaders, and by extension the Communist Party itself, were increasingly just "signboards" (**zhaopai**).

Recently *dzi ka* (**qianke**) a pre-1949 term for broker had been revived although it remained a rather derogatory term. One woman I spoke with who said that she could be called a *dzi ka* described one aspect of her work as being a "cultural" or "propaganda" broker (**wenhua/xuanchuan jingjiren**). These activities involved publicizing products through placing articles and creating opportunities in the media. She drew a distinction between "hard advertising" and the type of "soft advertising" she facilitated. The former is direct advertising and the latter advertising in the guise of news items or other features such as interviews. She used a **guanxi** "net" comprised of "familiar people" (**shuren**) including former classmates, and "friends of friends". In addition, she added, money is a pass/permit (**tongxingzheng**). In discussing her work she observed that she "earns money through sentiment" (**zhuan you qing de qian**). Referring to me she remarked that since I had been introduced to her by an old schoolmate that in our interview I was "earning her thoughts through sentiment" (**zhuan you qing de siwei**). In explanation she added that she

had only agreed to being interviewed because of the sentiment between herself and this school friend. I was dependent upon her friend's face (**kao lao pengyou de mianshang**) and using the sentiment of the friendship between them to obtain her thoughts.

Resort to particularistic contacts appears to play a major part in all Chinese societies and in China before 1949. For instance, Gordon Redding writes that "trust and dependability based on social obligations rather than contractual relations are central to the understanding of Overseas Chinese business" (1993: 99) Similarly in Mazu, Taiwan "people believe they can only rely on those with whom they have an emotional attachment, **ganqing**, to protect them in times of difficulties and to help them reach their goals in better times" (Jacobs 1982: 229-30). Indeed, the remarkable feature of the PRC may not be the apparent re-emergence of their importance but their reported lack of importance during the early years of Communist rule. To investigate this it is necessary to locate the proliferation of the resort to particularistic ties within wider discourses on human relationships. In tandem with the perceived need for **guanxi**, informants frequently lamented a lack of unity amongst Chinese people. One informant remarked that she often felt that there was hatred (**chouhen**) between strangers - a case not so much of the "polite estrangement" described by Giddens (1990: 81) but rather an absolute estrangement. A local writer told me "Chinese people do not unite (**tuanjie**) but they are extremely good at protecting themselves" (**feichang hui baohu ziji**). This individualism (**geren**) and lack of unity of Chinese people was frequently contrasted to a perceived solidarity on the part of Japanese.[7] This perception was conveyed in a short rhyme of which I heard various versions: one Chinese is a dragon, but ten Chinese are ten insects; one Japanese is an insect, but ten Japanese a great dragon. The lack of unity and cooperation was matched by a sense that everyone was out for themselves and also jealous of the success of others. A typical comment was that made by a worker at Shanghai's Baoshan steel works who told me "in China, people are jealous (**duji**) of others who have more than them. In the West people would strive to surpass this person, but in China they seek a way to pull them down."

Various indigenous explanations were given for the prevalence of jealousy and lack of unity. Some cited the crowded living environment of Shanghai. This was described as creating a calculating (**jinjin jijiao**) and petty (**xiaoxinyan**) personality. Others blamed "China's history" or "culture", often as agents which act upon people - an underlying thesis

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[7]It is interesting that Nakane contrasts the Japanese family system as one based upon membership of a collective group and the Chinese system as based on relationships between particular individuals (1970: 14).

of the **Heshang** documentary series (see Su & Wang 1991). One man cited a traditional phrase: each person sweeps the snow from their own doorstep, no one bothers about the snow on another's roof (**geren zi sao men qian xue, mo guan ta ren wa shang shuang**). In Shanghai this same sentiment of lack of concern for others was encapsulated in a phrase: ignore (even) the affairs of the dead (*xi nin va kuɛ* - **si ren bu guan**). More frequently political/conspiratorial and economic explanations were given. These explanations for the lack of unity mirrored those given for the increased resort to **guanxi** - the obverse of trust in abstract systems such as comradeship is placing trust only in those one knows.

Political/ conspiratorial explanations blamed deterioration in interpersonal relationships firmly on the policies and campaigns of the Communist Party especially during the Maoist period. One informant remarked that the Communist Party had "harmed the thinking, personality and emotions of people." In place of the "former honesty of Chinese people" he now saw only **jiahua** - lies, **dahua** - boasting, **konghua** - empty words. A view often expressed was that Mao had deliberately orchestrated a policy of keeping the people in ignorance (**yumin zhengce**) - for instance, by denying access to foreign news - and sowing discord (**tiaobo**) through his notion of class struggle in order to divide and rule (**fen er zhizhi**). As one informant expressed it, "Mao Zedong made it a society in which people attacked (literally "ate") each other (**ren chi ren**) in order to maintain control." Turning a current party slogan on its head, one academic remarked acidly, "Deng Xiaoping calls for 'stability and unity' (**anding tuanjie**). But that is the last thing the Communist Party really wants. If the **laobaixing** unite, it will be unstable for the Communist Party." Economic explanations stressed the impact of the reform era in which, for example, wealth differentials had expanded greatly and money become a key criterion of success.

4.3 Indigenous "Histories" of Personal Relations

A popular rhyme characterised the change in interpersonal relationships over three decades: In the 1950s people helped each other. In the 1960s they struggled against each other. In the 1970s they cheated each other. (**Wu shi niandai, ren bang ren. Liu shi niandai, ren dou ren. Qi shi niandai, ren pian ren**). This short rhyme proved a useful sounding board to discuss dimensions of change in human relations. Many respondents spontaneously told me this rhyme whilst others, when asked for their opinion on its veracity, considered it an accurate portrayal of how things were. The depiction of the

1950s, in particular, was accepted by almost all informants, of all ages, as axiomatic. The early years of Communist rule were often described as a "golden period" in which standards of morality, politeness and interpersonal relationships were particularly good.[8] Many felt nostalgia (**huaijiu**) for the comradely friendship (**tongzhi youyi**) of this time. One man recalled that in 1949 neighbours who had not spoken for years would speak to each other and that "during 1949-52\3 people were like brothers (**xiongdi**) but soon the class struggle began." Another contrast was that "in the early years after 1949, people queued for buses, now everyone tries to grab a seat." Occasional dissenting voices included that of a former KMT official who commented that "superficially interpersonal relations were very good with everyone saying 'comrade'. But this was only on the surface (**biaomian**), people dared not do otherwise. People were lying from dawn till dusk." A journalist in his early forties suggested that positive views on the past may be based upon nostalgia, a notion expressed in the proverb: **renxin bu gu** - people's hearts are not what they were in the old times.

4.3.1 The 1960s - People Struggle Against Each Other

It is a source of endless joy to struggle with heaven, earth and man.

Mao Zedong

Of all the political campaigns after 1949 the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) was described as having had the most deleterious effect upon interpersonal relationships, although, as I show later, others formed strong friendships at this time. One man described the Cultural Revolution to me as an "interpersonal hell" (**ren yu ren diyu**) and I heard many examples of the way human relations were affected at this time. At its most extreme form individuals were physically and/or socially isolated (**guli**). One victim of social isolation described himself as having been a "political orphan (**zhengzhi de guer**)" because neighbours, friends, work colleagues and relatives all ignored him. Tu Wei-ming describes many people in this position as having "immediately imposed a moratorium on their *guanxi* (human relations), fearing that their 'social disease' was potently contagious" (1992: 267). Similarly my informant told me "when I saw people I knew (**shuren**), I deliberately ignored them to protect them as anyone seen talking to me would have problems." Such people experienced profound "existential anxiety" which, as Giddens remarks, is the most extreme opposite of trust (1990: 99-100). Giddens describes this state of mind as one of

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[8]Mayfair Yang, who conducted research in Beijing, found that "[i]n the years between 1949 and 1956-7, human relations are remembered as being very simple and straightforward. Spirits were high and people genuinely embodied the socialist ethic of working hard and helping each other" (1986: 56, 55-9).

dread, and it is striking that both this informant and others used the term **kongju**, "dread", to describe this period. This sense of dread may persist until the present day. One interviewee told me that nearly thirty years later occasional nightmares - including on the day of our interview - caused him to wake at dawn with the same feeling that "it was the start of another day as a victim." This anxiety was neither a consequence of "urbanization" or "modernization" *per se* in the sense Giddens anticipates but rather of policies instigated by the state.

There was great pressure on individuals to conform and considerable fear that unorthodox views or behaviour would be reported. Some reported others because they believed in the Communist Party others for more partisan motives (see Shirk 1982). Trust in others "is psychologically consequential for the individual who trusts: a moral hostage to fortune is given" (Giddens 1990: 33). Faced with such risks it was necessary to take precautions (**yufang**) and exercise caution in all interactions. One informant told me that he took this to the point of not speaking at all. Treatment of the elderly is often said to have deteriorated during the Cultural Revolution and the universal moral basis of professions such as medicine and teachers undermined since "class enemies" - "cow demons and snake spirits" (**niugui sheshen**) - and their offspring were expected to be treated with less consideration than "the people". A former teacher remarked that the legacy of class conflict is that people are now callous (**lengku**), aloof and indifferent (**wudong yuzhong**) and will not deal warmly with each other. Often both activists and victims described themselves as having been used (**liyong**) and tricked (**shangdang**) by political leaders (especially Mao and/or the Gang of Four) during the Cultural Revolution. Against this dominant view other "histories" stressed that the social atmosphere (**shehui fengqi**) was much better during Mao's time and that people then were more honest (**laoshi**).

4.3.2 1970s Onwards

The final verse of the rhyme proclaims that in the 1970s "people cheated each other". This verse was less well known than the preceding two and more controversial. I asked the first person to tell me this rhyme, a worker in a joint venture, to add his own supplementary verses for the 1980s and 1990s. He first added an extra line for the 1970s of "people concealed things from each other" (**ren yinman**). For the 1980s he suggested "each person looked after their own affairs" (**ge ren guan ge ren**). For the 1990s he speculated that it may be "people trample on each other" (**ren cai ren**). A common reaction to the statement that in 1970s people cheated each other was that this was far

more appropriate for the 1980s and 1990s. A female factory worker had only heard the first line of this rhyme. She was uncertain how the intervening years should be judged but suggested "people 'consume' each other" (**ren chi ren**) for the 1990s.

Most people considered that standards of living had risen in the post Mao years and that there were fewer constraints on everyday life. However, these improvements were often described as having been accompanied by deterioration in standards of public and private morality. Such views were expressed even by those highly supportive of the Open Door policy and reform. A not uncommon view was that current trends compounded damage done during past political campaigns. A woman in her late thirties remarked that "the Cultural Revolution severely damaged interpersonal relations (her father committed suicide at this time), there was no link up (**goutong**). Now relationships between people are via money. People will only have contact (**laiwang**) with others if it is profitable to them." A 38 year old clerk described personal relations in the 1990s as lacking human feeling (**renqing**) and emotion (**ganqing**) and as cold (**lengmo**), selfish and dominated by money. It was widely believed that professionals such as doctors and teachers require gifts and "red packets" (containing money) in order to ensure their attention. An intellectual expressed his concern that "morality cannot be imported, but China has none of its own." He added that "Deng Xiaoping's 'black and white cats' have now found their way into interpersonal relationships. If is advantageous to themselves people make friends with others regardless of whether they are 'black' or 'white cats'."[9] These statements accord closely with Simmel's thesis that a monetized economy provides greater individual freedom but also the danger of "a selling and uprooting of personal values" (1990: 404).

In the reform era the state has paid less attention to communal activities. Moreover, since active involvement in public or social affairs laid one open to considerable potential dangers a pervasive spirit of "the more you do, the more mistakes you make" (**duo zuo, duo cuo**) seems to have taken hold. I found that people often ought solace in home life and disregarded all matters that did not directly concern them (**bu guan xianshi**). When asked about the ills of their society a common response was that "nothing can be done" (**meiyou banfa**). One worker outlined his philosophy of life: "When asked to do something, I do my best to avoid agreeing to do it. If pressed I agree but then don't do it. If I really have

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[9]This is an ironic play upon Deng Xiaoping's famous aphorism of the early 1980s: It does not matter if the cat is black or white so long as it catches mice. This statement was understood as implying that ideology is less important than economic development. Deng has recently reiterated this pragmatic paradigm in a more direct fashion observing: It does not matter if something is called socialism or capitalism so long as it improves the life of the ordinary people.

no choice, I just do the minimum possible."

The main public events in recent years which contrast with such expressions of cynicism were the demonstrations of 1989. Tu Wei-ming describes how "[f]or approximately fifty days, the city of Beijing exhibited a civic spirit, a sense of civility, thought to have been destroyed by the Cultural Revolution. There was a pervasive feeling of interconnectedness, mutual bonding, and collective responsibility in public places" (1992: 227). In Shanghai this sense of shared feeling was replicated to an extent, particularly amongst the young people who constituted most of the demonstrators. However, many residents took no part in these events; on the evening of June 4 I visited a **getihu** restaurant, only to find the manager and a group of his friends enjoying a spontaneous party, apparently unconcerned by events in Beijing. Many Shanghainese, believed, like the worker informant noted in the previous paragraph, that young people were being tricked and duped by political manipulators in just the same way as his generation had been in the Cultural Revolution. Since the early 1990s the pervasive apathy which followed June 4 had increasingly been replaced by a belief that making money was one's primary concern.

Cartoon 10 Caption "The Mouse Has Money"
(XMWB 29 July 1993)

The change in personal relations was reflected in the way people described changes in the morality and behaviour of officials. An academic couple in their early fifties both of whom experienced persecution during the Maoist era still expressed nostalgia for some aspects of that time. Both felt that then "leaders and cadres shared the hardships

(**tongganku**) of the **laobaixing**. People's morality (**daode**) was good and they would help each other, cadres would 'serve the people'." A dominant impression in 1990s Shanghai was that officials were primarily concerned with personal enrichment.[10] In the view of a retired mechanic, "now party members do what they want for themselves, their sons and grandsons, only then may they consider other people." A recent addition to the phrase **rudang zuoguan** - join the party to become an official - was **zuoguan facai** - get rich by becoming an official. In the words of one informant securing an official position was now simply a strategy to become rich (**facai de shouduan**). With the blurring borderline between state bureaucrat and private merchant (see Solinger 1992), it was widely believed that offspring and relatives of high officials were making vast profits from business activities (see also Rocca 1992: 415).

Despite common perceptions that this decline in morality was due to factors such as the political campaigns of the Maoist era and the marketization of the economy it can also be viewed as a return to a more traditional pattern. The perceived link between officials and personal enrichment is made abundantly clear in traditional phrases such as: only the prospect of wealth will make someone travel a thousand miles to become an official, if it were not for gold who would go? (**qian li zuoguan zhi wei cai, bu wei huangjin shei ken lai**?). Another traditional phrase comments: after just three years even an honest official will become rich (**san nian qingguan zhifu, shi wan xuehua yin**). The stress upon particularistic relationships and the perception that officials showed favouritism is evident in the saying: when a man attains the Dao, even his chickens and dogs ascend to heaven - when a man gets to the top, all his friends and relations get there with him (**yi ren dedao, ji quan sheng tian**).

4.4 Bases of trust

In the preceding section I outlined "histories" of the changing nature of interpersonal relationships. In a society where "knowing" people and having connections is considered so crucial it is important to understand the types of relationship involved. In this section I examine the key bases of trust which people relied upon and try to

[10]This new ethos is by no means limited to Shanghai. Madsen writes of the new generation of leaders in a Cantonese village in the 1970s that "a common term used to characterize their private lives was selfishness; these people did not care about anything outside the circle of their own small families" (1984: 218).

produce a nuanced view of each.[11] This involves drawing attention, where appropriate, to changes over time and where feasible and applicable to generational, gender and occupational differences. Thus, an unmarried young woman living at home noted how the degree of importance placed upon different relationships varies with the life cycle. For the time being she considered friends - with whom she had a common language (**gongtong yuyan**) - more important than family. However, she expected that when married with her own child that her own family would be the most important to her. A young wife remarked on a gender difference in this respect. She rarely contacted friends but her husband frequently spent time with friends. Following the birth of her child her relationship with her mother-in-law, with whom she lived, took on much greater significance. The legacy of political campaigns and more rigid conformism of the past was often evident in the interactive style of different age groups. Since the death of Mao the presence of the state was no longer felt to be so omnipresent or all encompassing. Young people more readily spoke their minds, for instance on political matters, whilst older people tended to discuss such topics only in hushed voices.

When I asked a man in his forties with whom he had the best relationships he described these as circles (**quanzi**). The inner circle consisted of his household (**jiating**) and relatives (**qinqi**). Radiating outwards were university classmates (**tongxue**); friends (**pengyou**) and then work colleagues (**tongshi**). I follow this order and add the following: student-teacher; same native place; relationships of mutual benefit. I examine trust in abstract systems in the concluding section.

4.4.1 Qualities of Human Relations

Before examining these bases of trust it is important to outline some of the qualities which are considered an integral part of human relations. The first term is **yiqi** (code of brotherhood, personal loyalty) which has associations with the **xia** - chivalrous - tradition of the Mohists, a school of thought in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (770-221 BC) and with **jianghu yiqi** - code of brotherhood or the personal loyalty between those who engage in wandering trades (Yang 1986: 108-12). This idea was alluded to in the contemporary saying: at home depend upon relatives, outside rely on the help of friends (**zai jiali kao qinqi, zai waimian kao pengyou bangmang**). According to the **xia** tradition one should sacrifice one's own life (**liang lei cha dao** - cut out one's own ribs)

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[11] In his study of local politics and **guanxi** Jacobs (1982) outlines seven bases of **guanxi** - locality, kinship, co-worker, classmate, sworn brotherhood, surname and teacher-student.

for the sake of a friend and have absolute sincerity (**chicheng**). With **yiqi** there is an injunction to provide help when asked. Indeed it is complex layers of mutual indebtedness for favours and help received and given which create, promote and strengthen **yiqi**. As Mayfair Yang remarks, "a debt keeps a relationship open" (1986: 91). Commenting on the importance of "continuing reciprocation", Fei Xiaotong points out that to **suanzhang** - settle accounts - also has the implication of breaking of relationships (1992: 124-5). A Chinese academic considered that in contemporary Shanghai, **yiqi** was confined to young people and especially manual workers. He expressed admiration for **yiqi** but remarked that most intellectuals looked down upon **yiqi** as uncivilized. Both men and women could have **yiqi**, although it was generally used of men. A man in his nineties observed that if friends have **yiqi** their relationship can be stronger than that between brothers. Discourses on **yiqi** also invoked regional stereotypes, this man added that "northerners and Japanese stress **yiqi**, southern Chinese are devious (**huatou**)."

The term **qing** (feeling, sentiment, emotion) combines with other characters to form, for example, **ganqing** (emotion, affection), **aiqing** (love between man and woman) and **qingyi** (friendly feelings). **Qing** refers especially to male-female relationships but may also exist between friends, for instance, an act of kindness may evoke **qing**. **Yiqi** is felt to be rather "coarse" (**cu**) and **qingyi** comparatively "fine" (**xi**) and "gentle and soft" (**wenrou**). A third term **xin** (confidence, trust, faith) combines to form the expressions **xinyi** (good faith) and **xinyong** (trustworthiness, credit) which are generally used in business (see De Glopper 1972: 304-11). It does not involve emotion but an injunction that one's words can be trusted (**jianghua suanshu**). Ultimately it is backed up by law.

Ambrose King writes of the importance of "**guanxi** avoidance" as essential to create the level of instrumental rationality necessary to engage in business transactions (1991: 75-8). He observes that actors engage in a "compartmentalization" strategy to keep separate specifically economic exchanges from diffuse social exchanges.[12] I find this notion of compartmentalization helpful in 1990s Shanghai. In one small business I knew of, failure to compartmentalize in this way was a major contributory factor behind the failure of the enterprise itself. In this case the type of generalized reciprocal relations demanded by codes of **yiqi** became implicated in business transactions. By contrast, a highly successful

[12]King's notion of compartmentalization builds upon Fei Xiaotong's insight on the way Chinese villagers would walk miles to a market where they could exchange goods and act "without human feelings" (1992: 126-7).

businesswoman explained her philosophy on human relations in business very succinctly: business is business, friends are friends.[13] The import of this was clear, the former involves a degree of calculation and detachment wholly inappropriate in the latter relationship which is built upon **yiqi**.

The comments of a young saleswomen clearly reveal the tension she felt in this compartmentalization. She observed that "businessmen only pay attention to profit (**liyi**). If there is no profit they will not have contact with you. In only discussing profit, never affection (**ganqing**) I feel that my self is lost (**shiqu ziji**)." When this compartmentalization breaks down awkward dilemmas can emerge. A secretary told me how her boss had become aware that she has a friend who can obtain airline tickets. However, the secretary was reluctant to use this contact since the "human feeling would be too heavy" (**renqing tai zhong**) - in other words she would feel too indebted to this contact. The demands of commercial organizations and "human feelings" clashed since the boss expected her to use this "route" (**lu**) every time whilst the secretary considered that these two spheres should remain separate. One young man told me that to avoid such dilemmas in applying for jobs he deliberately relied upon newspaper advertisements rather than **guanxi**. He explained that if a job is given via a personal connection that one's own conduct and behaviour is then embroiled with and will affect this person's "face." It was a debt and responsibility he did not wish to shoulder.

Compartmentalization can also operate at a different level. During the reform years name cards have become a vital accessory to many professionals and business people in Shanghai. Often one person has multiple name cards. In the course of a single interview an interviewee would first hand me a name card relating to their main profession. As the conversation touched upon differing aspects of their life so other cards may appear relating to sideline activities. In addition, a name card with the home address may be proffered - the hand-written addition (or omission) of home phone, pager and/or mobile phone numbers adds another degree of finesse. The presentation of different name cards could be construed as proffering differing versions of their self, the decision of which cards to give dependent upon considerations including the degree of trust developed.

4.4.2 Relatives

Permeating Chinese society from the national to the familial level is the conception

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[13]De Glopper reports a similar situation in Taiwan where with business, kinship and neighbourly relations "each has its own principle and purposes, its own satisfactions and problems" (1972: 312).

that there is a fundamental distinction between the inside and the outside (**nei-wai you bie**). China is "inside country" (**guonei**), foreign places "outside country" (**guowai**) and foreigners "outside country people" (**waiguoren**). This perception is so deeply ingrained that long-term Chinese residents in England continue to describe non-Chinese inhabitants as "foreigners". At the micro level this inside-outside boundary is evident in the dialect term *a la zi ga nin* (**women zijia ren**) - "our own people/one of us." In its most strict application only close family members who share the same surname (**tongxing**) are included. However, as King (1991: 67) points out, this boundary of "our own people" possesses considerable elasticity. It may, for instance, include a close friend who is regarded as if they were a family member. To be "one of us" is to be bound by rights and duties of reciprocity, mutual aid and support. Traditionally, those related or friendly with an offender could be punished (**lianzuo**) and this ethos persisted through the class labelling of families during the Maoist period.

In Shanghai various relationships invoked kinship terms.[14] For instance, one may call a boy younger than oneself **xiao didi** (little brother) and a man over fifty **lao baba** (old father). Female friends may call each other **ah jie** (sister). A sarcastic term for the police was (**lao**) **niangjiu** (mother's brother). Traditionally, the **niangjiu** plays a crucial role in family disputes, for example, at the time a family breaks up (**fenjia**). The traditional term for a matchmaker (**meiren**) appeared to have fallen into disuse. It had been replaced by **jieshaoren** (literally - a person who introduces) which, unlike **meiren**, could also be used for somebody who introduces business contacts. A particularly interesting fictive kinship term was **xiao xiongdi** (little brothers). These were people, male or female, of roughly the same age who help each other. They may be fellow students, neighbours, people who went to the countryside or were Red Guards together, students of one master, friends, friends of friends, from the same native place, or the head of a university and department heads. A similar term to **xiao xiongdi** which suggests a closer relationship was *tse ku* (**chu ke**) **xiongdi** - little brothers who have emerged from the same nest. The use of such terms can often be regarded as an attempt by metaphorical extension to make non-familial relationships become as dependable as (the ideal of) close kin ties. The manager of a stock exchange who told me that his aim was to make the company like a "warm home" (**wennuan de jiating**) clearly had in mind the harmony and reliability of the ideal family. The ultimate imaginary family is the nation - the "state family" (**guojia**).

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[14]Shanghai's status within China was often described using a kinship term. Articles called the city "elder brother" (**lao da**) in recognition of its vital economic contribution to the "nation-family" (**guojia**).

When asked about the impact of the Cultural Revolution on interpersonal relations the starkest portrayal was that even husbands and wives and parents and children could be pitted against each other. I was told of various instances of conflict between relations. For instance, a man is his early thirties told me how as a fifteen year old he had denounced his father for his pre-1949 association with the KMT. Another man told me how his family avoided contact with a grandfather who had been a comprador. Other families cut off links with relatives abroad. However, whilst husbands and wives could fall out over political disagreements and/or personal quarrels could become politicized my impression is that this was not common. More frequently, husbands and wives dared not speak openly for fear that their spouse may reveal incriminating details to a third party. Parents had to be especially careful when speaking in front of their children in case they innocently spread damaging information. In densely crowded Shanghai, there was also a fear that neighbours would overhear and report comments made. Even when spouses were called upon to publicly denounce partners it seems that many would agree beforehand the limits of such denunciations. One informant who knew of several cases of suicide by persecuted individuals told me that withdrawal of support by a spouse was often the final straw behind such action. Such evidence suggests the crucial role of close kin in maintaining ontological security. The fact remained that if one could trust anybody it was most likely to be close family members. In these circumstances the core family group could be strengthened as people retreated to the household as the only safe haven in a society full of risk and uncertainty.

In 1992-4 I found that relatives (**qinqi**) and especially husbands and wives and parents and offspring were generally considered the most reliable **guanxi**. For many Shanghainese various logistical factors tended to inhibit the maintenance of extensive interpersonal relations (see also Parish & Whyte 1984: 334-6) and fostered reliance upon close kin. These included a five and a half or six day working week which reduced the amount of time and energy available for visiting people. Shanghai's extremely crowded, slow public transport also contributed to a spatial reduction in human interactions although set against this was the increased availability in recent years of telephones and pagers.

As noted in chapter two the number of relatives families had in Shanghai and the degree of interaction with them varied considerably. Folk wisdom acknowledges that **yuan qin bu ru jin lin** - a relative at a distance is not as good as near neighbours. Helping and the reciprocal exchange of gifts (**song renqing** - literally "give human feelings") such as

mooncakes at Mid-autumn Festival all helped sustain feelings. Families with extensive kin networks in Shanghai tended to maintain frequent contact and were rather more inclined to ask for and offer help than in the British context. However, it is useful to note the comments of a married man of about forty who responded instantly to my question "who are the most reliable **guanxi**?" with the answer "relatives". When asked about his own family it transpired that following a disagreement over sharing property after the death of his mother the previous year that of his six siblings he had fallen out with all but one sister. When asked about this apparent anomaly - a clear instance of the anthropological insight that what people do and what they say they do often diverges - he cited the following two contrasting adages: **renqing da guo wangfa** - human feeling is stronger than the law of the land, **renqing shi zhi zhang de bao** - human feeling is as thin as paper. In subsequent conversations it became clear that this man's closest relationships, apart from his wife and child, were with friends and especially those he had been sent down to Yunnan with during the Cultural Revolution. Since the most crucial family relationships were usually those between husbands and wives and parents and offspring these are the ones to which I pay attention next.

4.4.3 Husbands and Wives

Romantic love and individualism, almost unknown in old China, have taken possession of modern Chinese youth.

Olga Lang (1946: 120)

When conceptualizing this relationship it is important to bear in mind the high degree of conformity when compared to a West European city. The vast majority of people in Shanghai married and had a single child. Most alternatives to this pattern were either illegal - such as having more than one child or living together without marriage - socially unacceptable or an indication of social failure. An instance of the latter would be a childless marriage although some recent press coverage of a new phenomenon DINKS - "double income no kids" - suggested a modification of this traditional view. Divorce rates were rising but still low and considerable stigma was still often attached especially to female divorcees. People often voiced Confucian notions that being able to handle family relationships was an important part of being human (**zuoren**) and that the stability (**anding**) of society depends upon the unity (**tuanjie**) of families. Material considerations conjoined with cultural imperatives to stress the importance of marriage. Above all, **danwei** generally only allocated housing to married couples. It was of considerable importance, therefore, that the marital relationship be built upon trust.

Since the early 1980s romantic love had become a topic of considerable moment. This included numerous articles, books and radio programmes on topics such as sexual fulfilment and the "ideal partner" (cf. Evans 1994). Sexual mores and morals were felt by many people to have declined with a growth in divorce, pre-marital pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, extra-marital love affairs and prostitution. Despite burgeoning media attention to romance and love it was my impression that young couples considering marriage in Shanghai paid greater attention to practical considerations than their English counterparts. Whilst the affective component of marriage may be growing in importance romantic attachment alone was generally considered too weak a basis for a lifetime together. There appeared to be a gender distinction in this with young men more interested in the physical appearance and affective qualities of a potential spouse and young women more concerned with practical considerations. An unmarried girl in her mid-twenties suggested that "girls consider practical aspects more because they do not have much chance to become rich on their own but must rely upon their husbands." A rhyme depicted changing ideals of prospective marriage partners for women - it implicitly accepts the notion that a woman's status is dependent upon her husband: in the 1960s marry a soldier (**dabing**), in the 1970s marry an intellectual (**lao jiu**), in the 1980s marry the "navy, army and air force" (**hai**, **lu**, **kong**) - homonyms of overseas connections (**haiwai guanxi**), compensation for confiscated property (**luoshi zhengci**), accommodation available (**kong fangzi**), in the 1990s rich men (**dahu**) are popular. A highly significant factor was that **danwei** seemed more inclined to allocate housing to men. A recently married woman who lived in a large flat over 70 m^2 with her husband told me that her husband's access to housing was a key determinant in deciding to marry him. In addition, a study in Shanghai found that married sons were more than twice as likely as daughters to be joint resident with parents, with an increase in this figure during the 1980s (Davis 1993: 62-7). In important senses young men could afford to take the advice of a popular song and "follow their feelings" more than their female counterparts.

Accommodation was a prime consideration since many young couples had to continue living with their parents for at least some time after marriage. In addition, during the reform era costs of marriage had increased and parents generally had to contribute to this. These factors inevitably gave parents at least some influence over their children's selection of marriage partner. Parents most important sanctions were denial of accommodation and financial support and withdrawal of affection. Martin Whyte (1993a: 216) stresses the importance of kinship as a basis for social ties. These ties tend to involve

reliable primordial loyalties which provide "a natural basis for mutually advantageous exchanges" and be geographically and occupationally dispersed (Ibid). Whyte seems to infer from this that families engage in marriage strategies to extend and enhance their kin networks. However, my findings suggests that although families could influence mate selection the choice of partner was primarily taken by the young couple themselves. Moreover, parental influence was most likely to be negative, acting to prevent a match they considered unsuitable. Strategic thinking may be involved but the locus of this was the young couple themselves.

Western writers on China have generally stressed the patriarchal nature of traditional Chinese society. This is a view that informants in Shanghai readily accepted. Family relationships in the past were portrayed as the father being distant and serious and the mother providing kindness (**yan fu en mu**) within male dominated households and society (**da nanzizhuyi**). Children were said to respect (**jing**) both parents but to fear (**wei**) the father and love (**ai**) the mother. In Shanghai in 1992-4 family relationships often differed markedly from this pattern. Many younger men especially engaged in child-rearing and household chores. Popular stereotypes often satirized local men as **qiguanyan** - hen-pecked husbands. The fact that most women worked and contributed financially to the household was a key factor in increasing women's status. The importance of this economic factor is made clear in the saying that "the drawer (i.e. where the household income is kept) is the head of the family" (**chouti dangjia**). The relationship between status within the household and income was particularly evident with one young couple I visited. The wife engaged in diverse entrepreneurial activities often staying out late or travelling on business. When I asked her husband's opinion of this she remarked simply "he can't complain, I make a lot of money. He only earns 400¥ (about £40) pcm, that is not even enough to take me out for one meal." This example illustrates Simmel's notion that a monetized economy increases individual freedom.

A harmonious household (**jiating rongqia**) was often described as intimately bound up with its economic situation. Women usually controlled household finances (*dang ka*/**dangjia**) especially for day to day expenditure. A common pattern was for both salaries to be placed in a drawer and taken out as needed. The ideal in financial matters between husband and wife was to have transparency (**toumingdu**). Families who did not pool their income or discuss financial matters may be described as lacking in emotion (**ganqing**). One explanation I heard for women's control over household finances was that men were more likely to (in their wives view) squander money on friends. This perception was

associated with men's greater involvement in relationships of **yiqi** which required them to be generous (**dafang**) and hospitable.

Informants considered that the changing status of women in marriage and increased individualism was reflected in rising divorce statistics. The traditional view of marriage (for women especially) was: If you marry a chicken you are stuck with a chicken, if you marry a dog you are stuck with a dog (**jia ji sui ji, jia gou sui gou**). A married woman in her late twenties remarked that the way people now paid closer attention to themselves (**guanzhu ziji**) was a major change in contemporary Shanghai. She considered the increasing divorce rate as evidence of this new stress upon the self (**kaolu ziji**), taking it as an indication that people were searching for personal satisfaction in a relationship. The incorporation of alienation of affection as a grounds for divorce into the 1980 Marriage Law also hints at a greater stress upon individual feelings. There is evidence here of the transformation of intimacy described by Giddens. However, this transformation was to a degree gender specific. In addition, important material conditions impinged upon the emergence of the type of "pure relationship" he describes.

4.4.4 Trust Between the Generations

When considering inter-generational relationships in Shanghai the following factors are particularly salient: the city has a rapidly increasing proportion of elderly residents; living accommodation in Shanghai is severely limited; many households contain, for at least some time, three generations living under one roof; different generations have been socialised in sometimes markedly different social, economic and political environments. Each of these factors created its own configuration of responses, problems and potential contradictions.

Traditional conceptions of the place and role of the individual in Chinese society are encapsulated in various "traditional" sayings which were still widely known. "Above are elders, below are the young" (**shang you lao, xia you xiao**) makes clear the relational nature of the person and their embeddedness within the family.[15] The phrase "a son should look after the elderly and the young" (**zuo erzi yao yang lao, yang xiao**) describes a bounden duty (**tianzhi**) which stresses obligation and interdependence. The nature of parents' expectations and offsprings' duties are also enshrined in the saying: men rear sons

[15]The opposite of this expression is: when one person is full, nobody in the family is hungry (**yi ge ren bao, yi jia bu e**). The informant who pointed out this phrase observed that such people (i.e. those with no family ties) were the most likely to be hooligans. By inference, only being embedded in family relations is considered to give a person a stake in society.

to provide for old age, they plant trees because they want the shade (**yang er fang lao, zhong shu tu ying liang**). Reciprocity is an important component of inter-generational relationships. This reciprocity rests upon a basis of trust that the succour given to offspring will, when one is elderly, be reciprocated. Since 1949, whilst introducing pensions for many urban workers the Communist Party has stressed care of the aged as primarily a family responsibility (see Ikels 1993, Davis-Friedmann 1991). Although some older people I spoke with felt that respect for the elderly had been diminished during the Cultural Revolution most informants contrasted the perceived neglect and cruel treatment of elderly people in "the West" with that in China. This stereotype is, however, an overly simplistic representation of the actual position of the elderly in Chinese society.

A common belief was that in the West once children reach the age of eighteen they leave the parental home and are financially independent of their parents. In China most young adults remained bound (**kun**) to the parental home. The crucial factors which bound them were lack of alternative accommodation and low income - salary structures being based upon age-related increases. It was not uncommon for adult offspring to have no separate room of their own. A grandfather described three generations living together as "troublesome" and "complicated" and expected that nuclear households (**xiao jiating**) would become more common. Another grandfather remarked that inter-generational conflicts over expenses and different lifestyles could only be tackled by the older generation "keeping their mouths shut tight and their pockets loose" (**zuiba yao jin, koudai yao song**). In his estimation both generations now wished to live separately and he expressed his strong approval for this "foreign method" (*na ku bɛ fa*/**waiguo banfa**). During the reform era young people's salaries - especially those of the well-educated - may exceed those of their parents. In addition, there has been much new housing construction. These developments are likely to promote this trend. There was, however, also evidence that with the influx of consumer goods and increasingly expensive weddings that youngsters were becoming more dependent on their parents creating what Martin Whyte calls "revived inter-generational dependency" (1993a: 200).[16] The ideal was for the two generations to live separately but close at hand. Typically there was a "multifaceted interdependency between the household of parents and married children" (Unger 1993: 40). One young wife noted that ideally childless young couples preferred to live independently

[16]In a study in Chengdu, Whyte found that in the reform era young married couples are less likely to live separately after marriage than previously (1993a: 200). Unfortunately I lack the statistical data to compare the situation in Shanghai.

of parents but to live with them once they have a child so that the grandparents can help in child-rearing.

The tyrannical mother-in-law and the subservient, exploited daughter-in-law are persistent figures in "traditional" Chinese families. However, my findings support those of other researchers who observe a significant shift in the balance of power between the elderly and the young. Indeed, there is evidence that in Shanghai this shift began before 1949. Olga Lang wrote of mothers-in-law in Shanghai that "[t]he fate of these old women with modern daughters-in-law is tragic indeed" (1946: 237). The balance has shifted to such an extent that the Chinese media considers it necessary to publicize examples of "model" daughters-in-law. A worker at a large state **danwei** told me how the state seeks to educate the populace on the correct conduct of such relationships under the rubric of "spiritual civilization". This education included watching videos on how to manage relationships such as with neighbours and the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship. Workers had a short examination and the results of this along with marks subtracted for any "uncivilised behaviour" (**bu wenming xingwei**) such as fighting comprised "spiritual civilization marks" (**jingshen wenming fen**) which affected the level of bonus. A women in her early seventies told me that problems were greatly reduced if the mother-in-law works or has some other funds and "does not need to eat the food of her son (**bu yao chi erzi de**). But if she eats his food, she will certainly suffer from their anger."

Many elderly people complained that as young working adults they had handed over all their income to their parents whereas young adults now are helped financially by their parents. One retired man in his early sixties speculated that this state of affairs may not last and that in future, neither generation would aid the other (**shei ye bu guan shei**). He added that his own granddaughter - like all families in the era of the one child policy - would find her burden especially onerous as she would have to look after four people when she grew up. Another retired man also remarked on the changed relationship between the old and young. He told me that he calls his son **laoye** - master or grandfather! In his estimation the retired should be leisurely (**xiangshouxing**) but instead many are now "work-natured" (**laowuxing de**) who "**madasaodaiban**", that is, buy food, do washing and cleaning, look after grandchildren and carry out tasks for the children. Elderly parents who still supported their children were called **lao huangniu** - old oxen. Many parents spoke of being fleeced (**gua**) by their children - this may be said with affection or real bitterness. It was not uncommon for married offspring in their early thirties to still **gua** their parents. This **gua** included financial aid and labour including contributions to the costs of raising

grandchildren. The grandfather who was "work-natured" added that by serving the second and third generation in this way it allowed them to do well in their careers. He noted that in the past people raised sons to keep them in their old age (**yang er fang lao**). He felt that now "one should make savings to keep one in old age (**chuxu fanglao**). If parents have money their children respect them." Such a notion appears to represent a shift away from trust in one's close kin towards reliance upon personal savings and social insurance. In addition, women, especially, may prefer to have daughters, a marked divergence from the (apparent) pattern found in rural China. One young mother observed that when sons marry they look after their wives but that girls show greater concern for their parents. Trends such as increasing life spans, greater job mobility, more housing construction - which allows a greater possibility for nuclear households, and the one child policy are all likely to effect inter-generational relationships. I agree with Ikels' assessment that in the absence of "community care" there will be a growing need to develop support services for families to provide care for the elderly (1993: 332), especially if both marital partners continue to engage in wage labour. It seems that the elderly will have to become increasingly reliant upon systems. However, this represents not simply a consequence of modernity *per se*, as Giddens suggests, but rather is dependent largely upon state policies.

4.4.5 Classmates (**tongxue**)

Friendships created during the formative years of education were a particularly important basis of **tong** - "sameness" or co-identification. Classmates often formed bonds which lasted a lifetime. At university, for instance, six or seven fellow students share the same small room for four years providing the opportunity for mutual understanding and trust to be built. My oldest informant, a man of 92, described the way that he and fellow university classmates had maintained contact - including regular monthly meals (**jucan**) - for seven decades. University **tongxue** were in different **danwei** therefore there was no competition between them and relationships were good. A young teacher considered middle school colleagues her closest friends. She believed that at university students established contacts with others on an instrumental basis. For instance, there had been competition to curry favour with the political instructor (**zhidaoyuan**) who was responsible for job assignments. At middle school, by contrast, relationships between schoolmates were "purer", with friendships based upon affection. This is one of the rare instances of the type of "pure relationship" described by Giddens. At university students were not

"true-hearted" (**zhenxin**), and it was even worse "outside" in society where one should "always protect oneself" (**baohu ziji**). Despite the importance of **tongxue** I found some evidence that the diversification of the economy may undermine such friendships. A former library student who had entered the world of business felt that she now lacked a common language (**gongtong yuyan**) with old classmates. A distance (**gehe**) had emerged between them.

Strictly speaking **tongxue** are those who have studied together. However, the elasticity of such concepts meant that I could be introduced as their "**tongxue**" by people of a similar age who had attended the same university as myself although we had never studied together. Alumni of the same educational institute are more accurately described as **xiaoyou**. I encountered an interesting instance of the role **xiaoyou** may play in a school which engaged in commercial activities. A teacher observed that **guanxi** was essential in commerce and that an educational institute has a distinct advantage in this respect since it has many **guanxi** in the form of parents and **xiaoyou** in every kind of occupation. The teacher continued, "if we need to solve a problem, we simply flick through the school's files, there is bound to be somebody we can turn to for help." The school's entry into commercial affairs was highly controversial and it had mobilized various **xiaoyou**, for instance, now employed in the media to publish articles on its behalf. Subsequently, the school became engaged in a court case with a client and once again it sought the aid of **xiaoyou** to campaign on its behalf. This involved not only a publicity campaign but also backstage connection pulling, gift-giving and meal invitations. One teacher commented that society was dirty (**angzang**) and that by engaging in commerce various school personnel now **tongliu hewu** (wallow in the mire with somebody, associate with an evil person). The school was also involved in a joint venture and the foreign businessman was a **xiaoyou** in Hong Kong. A teacher noted that the school would fear to lose out (**chikui**) if it dealt with a stranger.

4.4.6 Friends

A popular piece of doggerel expresses the view: at home depend on relatives, outside depend upon friends (**zai jiali kao qinqi, zai waimian kao pengyou**). In Shanghai I found that friendship played an important part in many people's lives. Of the five relationships outlined by Confucius, only that between friends was one of equality with the ideal that all friends should be treated equally without partiality (**zhou er bu bi**). In practice, I found that there were different categories of "friend". The most unbreakable

were **zhixin pengyou** - intimate friends, literally "friendships in which one knows the heart." These relations involved all the values of **yiqi** and **qing** set out above. These friendships can be contrasted with **jiurou pengyou** - wine and meat friends. Amongst such fair weather friends the values of **yiqi** and **qing** may be invoked by the parties concerned but were probably absent in practice. There also tended to be a gender distinction in friendship. Women generally engaged less in **guanxi**, an observation also made by Mayfair Yang (1986: 32-4), and women with many social contacts (**shehui guanxi**) may be regarded with ambivalence. At best they may be considered "strong women" (**nuqiangren**) - in a society where the dominant view is that women should be soft and gentle (**wenrou**) - and at worst "loose women." People with many social contacts were likely to have **jiurou pengyou** and it is salient that wine and meat are "strong" foods with masculine connotations. An important defining feature of a **qiguanyan** (hen-pecked husband) is where the wife controls her husband's drinking and smoking (thereby curtailing his social activities) through tight control of his personal spending money (*si fang di*/**sifangqian**).

Ezra Vogel (1965) described personal relations in the PRC from 1949 to 1965 as characterized by a shift from friendship to comradeship. Vogel described fear as the main motive behind this shift. I heard of many instances were people felt they had been betrayed by friends during political campaigns. The need to exercise caution in all interactions also mitigated against friendships. An informant pointed out that if one did not see a friend for some time one may avoid them because their circumstances would not be known. This man recalled various instances where previously good friends had informed against him. He felt that political campaigns had deformed (**bianxing**) people's souls (**linghun**) and damaged their moral quality (**suzhi**). In his view those who were honest and loyal towards friends suffered whilst those without **yiqi**, who were cold (**lengdan**) and secretive (**baomi**), were least likely to encounter problems. This experience led him to regard the highest practicable moral standard in contemporary China as: do not have a heart which harms others, but do not lack a heart which defends oneself against others (**hai ren zhi xin bu ke you, fang ren zhi xin bu ke wu**). Political campaigns undoubtedly made people more cautious about human relations. My understanding is that fear mitigated against "fair weather friends" but that "true friendships" could be strengthened. Amongst those who were persecuted friendships which survived were especially highly valued. A former "counter revolutionary" described them as "life and death friendships" (**sheng-si zhi jiao**) which could continue into the second generation.

In the more politically relaxed atmosphere of the 1980s and early 1990s it became safer to have a wider network of friends. Moreover, the commercializing economy greatly increased the need to have **guanxi** friendships of a more instrumental type. Greater possibilities of association emerged including opportunities for a greater range of achieved as opposed to ascribed relationships. In Confucian social theory, which still permeates contemporary China, man is a relational being. Seen from one view a person is locked within a web of human relations, from another perspective he or she is at the centre of an ego-centred network (King 1991, Fei Xiaotong 1992). Apart from preordained relations, such as father-son, "Chinese **guanxi** building can be characterized as an ego-centred social engineering of relations building" (King 1991: 73). This brings the potential to act as "the architect in relation construction" (Ibid: 67). In Shanghai, people inevitably took the cultivation of **guanxi** to differing lengths. For some people the effort, energy and cost involved in making friendly contacts (**lianluo ganqing**) was not worthwhile. Without some degree of "emotional investment" (**ganqing touzi**) in the form of visits and so forth **guanxi** weakens - an outcome conveyed in the saying: when a person has gone, the tea grows cold (**ren zuo le, cha liang le**). The term "emotional investment" is clearly a highly instrumental conception of human relations. The use of **touzi** (investment) accords well with Smart's (1993) description of **guanxi** as "social capital of trust".[17] Such investment was especially vital to business people and those who acted as brokers in the commercializing economy.

The potentially instrumental nature of friendship is stressed in a common rhyme: one more friend is one more 'road' (**duo yi ge pengyou, duo yi tiao lu**). This notion of **pengyou** (friend) was very prevalent in Shanghai although intellectuals tended to regard this use of **pengyou** as confined to the "lower reaches of society" (**xialiu shehui**). This type of "friend" may be especially important to Shanghai's new entrepreneurs who readily seize every opportunity to widen their **guanxi** network. There was marked concordance with the businessmen in Lukang, Taiwan studied by De Glopper where "[t]he aim seems to be a lot of amiable, matey, but not too intimate ties with as many people as possible" (1972: 320). People I met for the first time and, for instance, market traders would often intersperse their conversation with the assertion "we are all friends". In the former case this seemed designed to create a basis of fraternity and equality, whilst in the latter traders appeared to imply that they would treat customers as though they were friends - with the implication that I could trust them not to cheat me. A similar commonly heard expression

[17]Note that during 1992-4, the term "investment" (**touzi**) was heard daily on media reports.

people used when asking strangers for a favour was **pengyou bangbangmang** - "friend, help me". The friend of a **getihu** restaurant owner told me that he liked the owner because he was a businessman "not just to make money but because he liked to make friends" (**jiao pengyou**). On another occasion, in a small private restaurant a group of drunken builders engaged me in conversation. They told me they were "brothers" (**xiongdi**) - the party included two women - out for a good time. They stressed that "we", that is their group and myself, "were all friends". In a society where notions of universal values seem limited it may be particularly important to fabricate a basis of commonality, of inclusiveness.

Inevitably most friendships draw upon some shared experience. This is made clear in the use of the character **you** - "friend" or "friendly" - as a suffix for various types of friendship where the first character defines the context of the friendship. Examples of this include **zhanyou** ("war friend") comrade-in-arms and **xiaoyou** ("school friend") alumni. People may also create their own expressions, for example, in the Summer of 1994 when the Shanghai share market had been falling for over one year many share buyers held shares bought at well above their current market price - in the new slang they were **taozhu** - stuck fast. Built on this term were **taoyou**, fellow holders of shares "stuck fast" in this way. Although I was told this term in some jest it is conceivable that it could form the basis of an interest group based upon mutual engagement in an abstract system. Another expression I heard, with more limited range, was **mayou** - mahjong friends!

Spatial proximity also provides the opportunity for friendships to be built. According to Parish and Whyte one of the distinctive features of interpersonal relations in Chinese cities since 1949 are closer ties between neighbours (1984: 349-53). These ties were especially important to the elderly and those tied to the home. As noted in the previous chapter I also found a sharp distinction between those who lived in older low-level, high density housing and residents of newer, high-rise apartments. Other developments noted in chapter three, such as improvements in living accommodation, new technologies such as television and air-conditioning and a growing fear of crime, all tended to promote the atomization of Shanghai into individual households and reduce contacts between neighbours.

Most friendships were between those of similar ages and the same sex - the main exception to the latter being in higher education. Generational differences were particularly interesting in a state where there has been dramatic changes in social policy and politics - each age cohort had grown up in a distinctive phenomenological environment. Informants

felt that there were clear generational differences in attitudes and values.[18] Different age cohorts shared if not always trust, then at least a potential shared basis of understanding. Those of the same age group stressed that they had a common language (**gongtong yuyan**) - this included both literal language and the language of shared experiences.

A basis of friendship specific to larger urban areas of the China are those between former sent-down youth (**chaxiong**). **Chaxiong** is an abbreviation of the term **chadui luohu xiongdi** - "brothers who went to settle in the countryside." A term **chamei** is used for women - literally sisters. For roughly a decade a majority of young people who graduated from high school were sent to the countryside for up to ten years. Spending these formative years together often in conditions of considerable hardship is a basis for many friendships. Even when people of this generation were not together the shared experience of having "gone down to the countryside", knowledge of the distinctive language of this period, shared difficulties of returning to Shanghai and similar age formed a basis for mutual understanding (**goutong**). Those socialized during the Cultural Revolution and especially those sent down to the countryside often claimed an inability to convey their experiences to younger people (let alone a foreign researcher). Unlike Beijing, Shanghai lacked a restaurant devoted to former sent down youth where they could reminisce (I suspect that this is only a matter of time). Despite this informal gatherings were common. I vividly recall an afternoon spent with a group of former sent down youth as they sang along to karaoke versions of revolutionary songs from this period (in multiple senses an alien language to younger Shanghainese) and expressed a piquant mixture of bitterness, betrayal and nostalgia for their younger days.

In the entrepreneurial 1990s, **chaxiong** may be an extremely valuable type of **guanxi** since they are now engaged in widely differing occupations including in other parts of China. A successful writer who lived in a high rise flat - where interaction between neighbours was usually very limited - told me that both she and her neighbour were former sent down youth, the former went to Yunnan and the latter to Heilongjiang. The writer felt a "special feeling" for her and made up her redundancy money in return for housekeeping work. In addition, the writer intended to set up a company which would employ this woman as a secretary. Another **chaxiong** who spent ten years in Heilongjiang now utilized contacts made at that time in entrepreneurial activities including smuggling leather goods across the Russian border. There were **chaxiong** at all levels of Shanghai

[18]It is interesting to bear in mind that many of the generation now in their twenties received much of their early socialization from grandparents who reached maturity before 1949.

society including amongst the local party elite which contained at least two unofficial groups of people - one which went to Heilongjiang and another to Chongming Island. A local journalist told me that the **Heixiong** ("Heilongjiang brothers") who were now high officials regularly met up, had meals together, and helped each other. Such groups of people who had spent time in the same place bear a resemblance to pre-1949 native place associations (**tongxianghui**), although in the case of these two groups of high cadres it appears that they only provided support for those already in positions of power.

4.4.7 Colleagues (**tongshi**)

Parish and Whyte found evidence of "considerable mutual aid" and "comradely concern" in Chinese factories" (1984: 337-8). This is in marked contrast to my findings on relations between co-workers. I was often told that interpersonal relations within work units (**danwei**) were "complicated" (**fuza**), a term with a distinctly pejorative implication. A common view was that relations between co-workers may be "superficially polite" but that undercurrents of jealousy and latent hostility may emerge when, for instance, one worker received a higher bonus or is favoured by the boss. An office worker confided that whilst the ideal is for co-workers to help each other (**bangmang**) that generally they are on their guard (**fangbei**).

It is interesting to speculate on why my findings should differ so markedly from those of Parish and Whyte. One difference was that my informants included a higher proportion of intellectuals and office workers rather than manual workers. Various informants felt that relations between intellectuals - in Shanghai this refers to university graduates and above - are poorer than those between other sections of society. A worker in one **danwei** observed that relations between workers (**gongren**) in her unit were much better than those between intellectual employees - although she felt that this was less apparent amongst younger intellectuals. A possible explanation is the residual impact of past political campaigns. This may account for the (perceived) generational difference within this **danwei**. A worker in an advertising joint venture told me that relations between co-workers were very good since they were "all young Shanghainese." Parish and Whyte found that "the Cultural Revolution was a time of retreat from friendship and fellow worker contacts" (1984: 345). These campaigns had the greatest impact upon intellectuals. An older informant described the destructive impact of the Cultural Revolution in his office which "overnight" reduced friendliness (**youqing**) to hate (**hen**). Those who suffered in the Cultural Revolution were often the victims of personal rivalries. Amongst many work

colleagues were informants who would report unorthodox views or behaviour of workmates to Communist Party officials. Such an environment demanded extreme caution and mitigated against friendships with work colleagues. In addition, there was a stress upon "completeness". For instance, in an office of ten people where one person was accused of being a counter-revolutionary all the other nine would have to denounce them. Non-participation was not an option, all must express an opinion (**biaotai**). It is notable that a "traditional" saying states that scholars tend to scorn each other (**wenren xiangqing**). By contrast, notions of **yiqi** tended to be most closely associated with manual workers.

Lack of friendliness between co-workers appeared to be founded upon the existence of a **li-hai guanxi** - a zero-sum relationship - between them. Amongst work colleagues matters involving bonuses or promotion were often cited as creating friction. In Tianjin **danwei** in 1986, Danching Ruan (1993) found evidence of "relational dependency". The relations involved are described as "quite instrumental". Ruan remarks that this dependency was due to workers lack of alternatives but to rely on the workplace to provide what they need. The patterns of **guanxi** use adopted by different categories of workers would be expected to differ. Different types of **danwei** have always varied in the degree of benefits they can bestow. In the reform era there are also increasing opportunities to attain these ends, including changing jobs, and sources beyond the **danwei** in which a person works. Some elements of these changes indicate the type of increased freedom Simmel posited in a monetized economy. The (expressed) lack of a **li-hai** relationship between share dealers mentioned in the previous chapter (see also chapter 6) provides an instance of this. Within **danwei** there was also evidence of greater freedom. A worker in a large state **danwei** contrasted the lack of freedom in his parents' youth to his own situation. In the past workers dared not question the authority of **danwei** leaders, now workers "say what they like about them, so long as they are out of earshot." This worker added that when leaders gave instructions "people such as myself now consider, is this advantageous to me (**dui wo you li**)? Only if the answer is yes do I carry out the task."

4.4.8 Teacher-Student

A traditional Chinese saying states: If somebody is your teacher for a day, they are your father for the rest of your life (**yi ri wei shi, zhong sheng wei fu**). A retired teacher considered that:

> This father-son (**fu-zi**) relationship has declined since 1949 and especially as a result of the Cultural Revolution when teachers were criticized and sometimes

> beaten by students. Politics distorted this relationship - teachers dared not praise the work of students from 'bad' class backgrounds nor criticise the work of those from 'good' class families. Teachers deliberately distanced themselves from their students. Teachers did not want to know what students thought in case the higher authorities (**shangmian**) asked about them, and especially about their political standpoint. It was best if one could honestly say 'I don't know'. He felt that now there is no emotion (**ganqing**) between teachers and students, teachers take their money and leave the classroom as soon as they can.

It was now widely believed that parents must give teachers gifts to encourage them to provide special attention to children. However, I also found that relations between teachers and favoured students could contain elements of the traditional pattern. For instance, former pupils may visit teachers on festive occasions and amongst past and present pupils of one teacher there may be bonds of sentiment.

4.4.9 Same Native Place (**tongxiang**)

Amongst the resident population of Shanghai, same-native place identification appeared to be of limited importance. Shared Shanghainese identity had significance only when ranged against some alternative identification. As a basis of trust it had little vitality in the city itself although in other places it may serve as basis of shared understanding - which may be a route towards trust. At a minimum, common dialect may evoke emotion (**qing**). For households with origins out of Shanghai same native place could be an important basis of mutual trust and support. Although I did not investigate this further, this may be especially true for those from the north of Jiangsu province - Subei people - who faced prejudice in Shanghai.

With the relaxation of migration controls in the reform era, same-native place relationships were, however, becoming of renewed importance. The vast majority of Shanghai's current frenetic construction work was being carried out by migrant labourers. Shanghai factories, especially in the Pudong new development zone, which had relatively lax legal controls, often employed non-Shanghainese labour. Companies sent out labour recruiters to distant provinces and arranged for workers to come to Shanghai. They were employed on low wage rates and must be housed and fed by the companies. Non-Shanghainese enterprises are being attracted to the city. For instance, some Sichuanese restaurants employed only staff recruited from Sichuan. At one of these restaurants a waitress explained that she had first worked in a Pudong factory and then moved to this current job. Anxiety over coming to Shanghai alone was reduced since the employers were **lao xiang** (people of one's native place). Giddens describes "the local community as a place" as one of the components of trust in pre-modern cultures which will be transformed

by modernity (1990: 102). It is, therefore, ironic that this basis of trust showed signs of becoming more important in a society in which the avowed aims of the state are "economic development" and "modernization".

4.4.10 Relationships Of Mutual Benefit - (**li-hai guanxi**)

In a situation where those in positions of power - described in local slang as "heads" (**toutou**) or "mothers-in-law" (**popo**) - were often described as being unfair and partial (**bu gongzheng**) and favouring friends and relatives those who possessed no special **guanxi** may seek to create some other basis of common interest (**li-hai**). This type of **li-hai guanxi** differs from that noted earlier of a zero sum relationship. In this context it refers to a relationship where the two parties interests (**li**) or losses (**hai**) are in some sense mutually intertwined. As noted earlier reciprocity plays a vital role in interpersonal relations. With **li-hai guanxi** in particular, when gifts are given or favours carried out it is said that one **xin zhong you shu** - one know's how things stand (literally "the numbers are in one's heart). Smart points out that repeated exchanges of gifts and favours creates not just obligation but also a "social capital of trust" (1993: 403). **Li-hai guanxi** operate in diverse spheres. In politics a **bangpai** (faction) acts to promote mutual interests. Within a **danwei** a group of workers may align its fortunes with a particular boss as his "little brothers". Individuals may engage those with power to allocate resources in a **li-hai guanxi**, thereby forming a patron-client relationship.

A common view was that leaders like those who flatter (**pai mapi**, **taohao**, **bajie**, **fengcheng**) them and workers may attempt to ingratiate themselves in this way. This ranged from laudatory comments on leaders' abilities to carrying out favours for them and giving gifts. One clerk told me that decorating work on his flat was carried out by peasants employed at his factory who were keen to stay in Shanghai. He had the power to make appointments, they sought to get on his right side (**pai mapi** - literally "pat the horse's backside") so that he would enable them to stay in Shanghai. A Shanghai proverb notes: food is not ruined by too much salt, the giver of many gifts incurs no blame (**yan duo cai bu huai, li duo ren bu guai**). Those who allocate housing were a focus of attention. A factory worker told me that in his **danwei** whether one is given accommodation depended upon one's **guanxi** with the factory boss. The relationship with him could be improved by flattery, including secretly taking gifts to his home. However, he added that if other workers saw that somebody had a good relationship with the boss they would be jealous and try to destroy this, for example, by telling the boss that one had

made mistakes at work. Many factory workers were being made redundant (**xiagang**) in Shanghai. A common belief was that selection of those chosen for redundancy was not based upon rational criteria but rather the personal relationship of the employee and the employer. A **xiagang** factory worker told me that although older and female workers were most likely to be made redundant she considered that the most crucial factor was one's **guanxi** with the factory boss remarking that "if you toady to the boss, you can stay."

It was widely believed that one must now create a **li-hai guanxi** with various types of professionals such as teachers and doctors. For instance, parents believed that they must give presents to teachers to ensure they gave their children extra care. Similarly, doctors were considered to require **hongbao** - red envelopes with money in them - to give patients good treatment. All those in positions of power and control over resources were the focus for gift-giving. Increasingly, these were not only bureaucratic gatekeepers but also entrepreneurs - although at times this distinction was blurred. A local expression sums this up as: who has milk is the mother (**you nai jiushi niang**). In business circles, inviting people to eat (**qingke**) and giving gifts could help create a **lihai guanxi**. Via eating and drinking one can pull connections (**tongguo chifan hejiu la guanxi**).[19]

In some circumstances there was direct resort to bribery (**huilu**) (see Rocca 1992). In popular usage bribery was often referred to using the indirect and less wholly derogatory metaphors **shaoxiang** (burn incense) or **pulu** (surface the road). Sometimes the "backdoor" may already have been opened but may still be blocked in some way (**bu kaitong**) so one must **pulu**. **Pulu** was used in similar circumstances to the English colloquial expression "grease somebody's palm".[20] A redundant (**xiagang**) worker told me that it was difficult for someone such as her to set up a stall as "whatever you do, you have to 'spread the path', for example, to obtain a trader's license. Everything requires money. If you don't 'surface the road', the road is impassable (**ni bu pulu, lu bu hao zou**)." This example illustrates extremely well the negative aspects of a monetized economy remarked upon by Simmel. For those with financial resources contemporary Shanghai offered much individual freedom. But in the case of such impoverished workers this emancipation may well be chimeric, it is "freedom *from* something, not liberty *to do* something" (Simmel 1990: 402). As the preceding section of this chapter indicates moral values were felt to

[19]Rocca notes the extent of "collective embezzlement" (1992: 412). In 1988, work units allegedly spent 25-30 million *yuan* on banquets, a figure equal to the national budget for education. On banqueting and other techniques of the "art of **guanxi**" see Yang (1986: 60-100).

[20]One definition I was given of **pulu** was "to put money on the road like a carpet".

have declined and venality and corruption increased since 1949 and especially since the late Cultural Revolution. Once again it is salutary to note a traditional proverb: the *yamen* gate is open wide; with right but no money, don't go inside (**yamen bazi kai, you li wu qian mo jin lai**). In traditional, as in contemporary China, it seems that money and **guanxi** talks.

4.5 Trust in Systems - Trust in Self

I have paid most attention to trust in other persons. I now focus attention on notions of trust in self and abstract systems and reflect on Giddens' notions on trust in the context of Shanghai. Giddens outlines a shift from trust relations vested in localized contexts such as kinship to those vested in the personal relationships of friendship and sexual intimacy and in abstract systems. I examine each of these aspects in turn. Initially, I note that Giddens theories are underpinned by various ethnocentric assumptions. He underestimates or ignores entirely the impact of divergent political, cultural and other socio-economic factors on trust. He appears to suggest that these transformations are inevitable concomitants of industrialization. As a writer in a liberal, democratic state he underestimates the extent to which a state can deeply affect human interactions. Examples from the Cultural Revolution especially show the extent to which actions instigated by the state can impact upon personal relations. In extreme cases these could create in individuals the existential isolation of "a separation from the moral resources to live a full and satisfying life" (Giddens 1991: 9). During the more politically relaxed reform era the state still has a profound impact upon households. A potent example of this is the one-child policy which in Shanghai, unlike many rural areas, is enforced with great effect.

In the case of kinship, for instance, it appears that political pressures, economic imperatives and cultural preferences conjoined to maintain dependence and trust in kinship ties. Although a contrast between kinship in urban and rural China may well demonstrate support for Giddens on this point. There is considerable evidence that kinship networks are generally far more extensive in rural areas of China where the household is the key unit of production. In urban China, where the household usually does not have this function, kinship ties are less elaborated but trust in close kin is clearly vital. Despite this, current trends, especially an increasingly elderly population and the one child policy, will make individuals more reliant upon abstract systems in the form of pensions and social insurance.

I also found some evidence for the "transformation of intimacy" Giddens posits.

There was clearly an increasing emphasis upon romance and sexual intimacy as indicated by numerous magazine articles, books and even radio phone-ins on this topic. However, my findings suggests that mate selection tends towards a "pure relationship" for men more than for women. This highlights the interaction of cultural and material imperatives on "emotional" factors. For example, marriage was viewed by most as a cultural and economic imperative and women especially were likely to consider that they were dependent upon their husbands for accommodation and social status. Within marriage itself, Giddens stresses the importance of "mutual disclosure". However, I agree with the Potters (1990: 192-5) depiction of the marital relationship in China as affirmed primarily through work and mutual aid rather than through the idiom of love. It is notable that the main area where couples stressed a need for transparency was in financial matters.

Friendship is the other personalized relationship of trust which Giddens considers will increase in importance in conditions of modernity. I have shown that in the context of Shanghai the term "friend" covers a range of different types of relationship from the highly instrumental to those resembling "pure relationships". Beyond deconstructing a simplistic notion of "friendship" as a single category it is also highly problematic to gauge the degree of "purity" of any particular friendship. In addition, shifting state policies have affected friendship. During political campaigns especially, the risk of betrayal was high and its potential consequences devastating. In such an environment people were extremely wary of creating too many "moral hostages to fortune". With the greatly reduced political pressures of the reform era and with the need, particularly for those engaged in commercial activities to extend their contacts, there is a strong incentive to increase "friendships" of the more instrumental kind.

Giddens' key focus is upon the increased importance of abstract systems as loci for trust. Once again his theories appear to be partially bounded in ethnocentric assumptions since he appears to conjoin trust in the knowledge of expert systems with trust in those who operate them. In the instance of experts such as doctors, patients appeared to have faith in both Western and Chinese medical systems. Unless proven otherwise they trusted the skill of any given practitioner. However, a patient was likely to believe that a particular practitioner would only treat them to the maximum level of his or her abilities if they had a personal relationship. The individual must have both trust in the expert system and trust in the "access points" of this system.

The project to propagate comradeship can be construed as an attempt to popularize an abstract system. As Vogel (1965) points out, this project was associated with a degree

of fear which demanded caution in friendships and intimate relations. In Giddens scenario trust in personalized relations and in abstract systems both increase. In this example one seems to have been promoted at the expense of the latter. Various "histories" portrayed the way comradeship was undermined, a decline paralleled by and implicated in a decline in trust of the abstract systems of the Communist Party and socialism. It is important to bear in mind the extent to which socialism and the Communist Party were considered synonymous. In addition, the Party was often personalized in the form of Mao Zedong and/or the Gang of Four. For instance, when people discussed events such as the Cultural Revolution they often made comments such as "we were fooled by Mao Zedong (or the Gang of Four)." In this merging of individual/s, ideology and policy there are clear grounds for arguing that the Communist Party and socialism are, in a sense, not abstract systems at all, but extended forms of personal relationship. The fall from grace of the Party has been accompanied by the ideals it espoused. It is notable that during seventeen months research I never encountered a single person who actively argued in favour of socialist ideals.

The destruction of trust in the Communist Party and the loss of the sense of ontological security this appears to have provided in the early 1950s can be charted in political campaigns such as the Cultural Revolution, with June 4, 1989 finally eroding "any vestigial notions that the party was a moral force in Chinese society" (Saich 1992: 50). Much earlier campaigns such as the "reform" (**gaizao**) of intellectuals also had an impact in alienating some citizens. One intellectual explained that in **gaizao** intellectuals were made to question their motives and to feel that they had original sin (**yuanzei**) for harbouring capitalist or feudal ideas from the old society. During his own **gaizao** he came to truly suspect his own professional motives and to feel a sense of self disgust (**zibei**) and to look down upon himself (**ziji kanbuqi ziji**). However, he noted that once **gaizao** changed from being voluntary to coerced people realised that its sole aim was that one should "do what the Communist Party said and follow Mao Zedong" (**ting dang de hua, gen Mao Zedong zou** - a slogan of the time). As another informant told me, "at first we believed that to have **gaizao** was a loss of face (**diulian**). Later we realized it was nothing of the kind."

An important shift which Giddens seems to overlook is an increasing trust in the self. Informants felt that there are clear generational differences in attitudes and values. Many young people asserted an increasing trust in the self. This was paralleled by what a young university lecturer described as a shift since the late 1970s from collective (**jiti**)

toward individualistic (**gerenhua**) activities. He added that people "now recognize themselves (**renshi dao ziji**) and then deal with relations with others. Before **danwei** and the state handled interactions with others." During the Maoist period the state promoted "revolutionary heros" such as Lei Feng who were "characterized by selfless dedication to the cause of building a collective utopia under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party" (Chu 1985: 268). In the early 1990s attempts were made to revive the "Lei Feng spirit". Some informants expressed nostalgia for the ideal of selfless comradeship he embodied, more expressed cynicism suggesting, for instance, that China's altruistic hero had gone abroad, perhaps to make money (*bu fen*/**pafen**). The increased emphasis upon the self was evident, for example, in the promotion of fashion and cosmetics. In post-Cultural Revolution films, for instance, Pickowicz found that many are "exploring the complexities of 'private' and 'individual' life in the urban sphere" (1995: 197). The rising divorce rate was further evidence of a stress upon individual desires. The age cohort sent down to the countryside appear to have been pivotal in this shift. Nearly two decades later many still felt a sense of betrayal but also that this experience, far from their families, dependent upon their own resources and often in harsh conditions, was a tempering (**duanlian**) through which they had learnt to rely upon their own abilities. I asked a couple in their late thirties who had taken part in political activities in the 1960s how they had then considered their actions. The husband replied, "at that time people did not think at all. They had no mind (**tounao**). There was just one mind, that of Mao Zedong. People had no self (**ziwo**)." His wife added, "in the past people had too little self, now they have too much." A young woman in her mid-twenties considered her age cohort very different from her parent's. She felt that whilst the latter had "solemnly followed the Communist Party. We are for ourselves (**weile ziji**). We have more personality (**you gexing yidian**), previously everybody had a single point of view allocated (**zhipei**) by the state, now we have our own."[21]

Belief in one's own self was often associated with a profound pragmatism and "this-worldliness". Most of my informants expressed neither faith nor interest in metaphysical beliefs or explanations. However, during the reform era the loss of trust in the Communist Party and socialism as expert systems has been replaced by a tendency toward trust in economic laws (**jingji guilu**) and the market. Indeed, if as I suggest, trust in the former was primarily a personalised relationship, this constitutes the type of qualitative shift

[21]This is an ironic use of the verb **zhipei** which is generally used for the allocation of materials and labour.

Giddens posits. A popular attitude was that deficiencies in the political system will be confronted by the inexorable development of the economy - a Marxian type view the Communist Party itself appears not to share. A similar argument was that the economy remained dependent upon **guanxi** because it was immature (**bu shu**) and that talent (**rencai**) would become more important in the future. It is notable that in this transition belief in progress remains, the mantle being passed from one set of expert systems to another.

I find Simmel's notions on the impact of the monetized economy a useful means of understanding events in contemporary Shanghai. Many of my informants appeared to feel a greater degree of personal freedom in the monetizing economy (lessened political control was also highly significant). The increasing significance of money payment for labour allowed (some) workers to engage in a wider range of more contractual, less embedded, associations than before. The power of money did indeed "lend to the individual a new independence from group interests" (Simmel 1990: 342). However, increased monetization could also produce new forms of dependency, for instance, the increased cost of wedding arrangements made young couples more reliant upon parents than during the Maoist era. Simmel also ignores the dangers of inflation and the sense of injustice created by rising wealth inequalities. Despite this, the sense of alienation which monetization may bring in Shanghai should be offset against the degree of alienation which existed before. It is notable that the self presentation of Shanghai's notoriously surly service workers was transforming with the incentive of material rewards (and increasingly the threat of redundancy). Moreover, there was a remarkable concordance with Simmel's notions on the liberating effects of a money economy in the way many informants described the reform process - with its attendant monetization of the economy - as China's second "liberation" (**jiefang**).[22]

As in the 1950s when Shanghai's citizens began to learn the language of class struggle and Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought so in the early 1990s a new vocabulary of "markets", "opportunities", "competition", "redundancy" and "bankruptcy" began to infiltrate into daily life. Shanghai's commercializing economy is loosening and remaking the fabric of the society. This is creating new reasons to be fearful and mistrustful, new sources of risk, uncertainty and danger to replace the old. At the same time it offers novel opportunities, possibilities and reasons to maintain and create bases of

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[22]The component characters of the term **jiefang** (liberation) officially used of the Communist Party's take over of power in 1949 are worth noting: **jie** - undo, untie; **fang** - let go, set free, release.

trust. I hope this study has been able to evoke a sense of the flux, tensions and parameters of human relations in Shanghai and to increase the understanding of trust in China's major city.

Old style five *mao* note

New style five *mao* note

Chapter 5 Consuming Shanghai - Hairy Crabs, Ghosts, and Christmas Trees

Shanghai was in the midst of a consumer revolution. A distinct shift appeared to be underway, from a "puritanical notion of deferred gratification" (Parkin 1993: 87) to a stress upon material well-being in the present (cf. Croll 1994). Evidence of this was readily apparent in the well-stocked stores packed with shoppers, the proliferation of advertising billboards, neon signs, lavishly furnished new restaurants, expensive nightclubs, karaoke bars, jewellery shops and fancy bakeries. The once drab clothing of its inhabitants was being replaced, especially that of the young, by the latest fashions and accessories. On the television, glamorous and alluring images designed to entice the "audience" seeped into almost every living room, deliberately, or unwittingly, creating new desires and new "needs". The consumer "tide", the "flood" of consuming, was there for all to see.

My focus in this chapter is to examine notions and patterns of consumption in contemporary Shanghai. As a basic starting point I consider that "consumption is a socially constructed, historically changing process" (Bocock 1993: 45). It is a process through which social values and senses of identity may be expressed, maintained, created and disputed. A key concern is to investigate the social values and senses of identity which may be implicated in differential modes of consumption. I pay particular attention to newly emergent types of consumption.

I am interested in consumption from a broad perspective and take it to include diverse aspects of consuming, whether it be food, clothes or leisure activities. As such my study addresses a theme which involves a cluster of Chinese (and English) terms. In Chinese the terms **xiaofei** (consume) and **xiaofeizhe** (consumer) are becoming popular. Both derive from English and are used in increasingly similar ways to their English equivalents. Thus one may speak of **gao/di xiaofei** (high/low consumption) and **xiaofei shuiping** (consumption levels). However, to speak of **dianshi xiaofei** would, I suspect, puzzle Chinese listeners just as much as "television consumption" would many non-sociologists in Britain. If the Chinese **xiaofei** is rather more restricted in its use than the English term, then the reverse case is true for the Chinese **chi**. **Chi** means "to eat" and "ate" but also includes "live on"; "annihilate"; "exhaust" and "suffer, incur" (CED 1988: 89).

The two initial sections of this chapter locate consumption in contemporary Shanghai within an historical context: the first examines the factors which restricted the development of popular consumerism during the Maoist period; the second outlines the

structural and ideological changes which have made possible the emergence of popular consumerism in contemporary Shanghai. The third section locates the rise of popular consumerism within a general commodification and commercialization of many aspects of life. I note the indigenous notion of rising consumption levels as an indicator of "progress" (**jinbu**) followed by oppositional voices which denied this link or expressed a feeling of exclusion from this consumption. I then outline the new importance of money and the rise of consumption in courtship and marriage rituals. The fourth section focuses upon foodstuffs and the semantic field of "eating". In particular, I examine ways in which food-based analogies and metaphors permeated the language local residents used to depict many aspects of life in Shanghai from individual behaviour to conceiving of the relation between Shanghai and the central government. In the fifth section I investigate instances of newly emergent forms of lifestyle consumption. In particular, I highlight the way small-scale entrepreneurs (**getihu**) and young people were often described as having distinctive consumption patterns. I then highlight the recent craze for famous brand name consumer goods and the re-emergence of Christmas, in part at least, as a new festival of consumerism.

5.1 Historical Background To The New Consumerism

In the 1920s and 1930s Shanghai achieved world renown and sometimes notoriety as a "modern", cosmopolitan, semi-colonial city administered on a basis of *laissez-faire* mercantilism. Photographs and written accounts of the period highlight the way fashion, advertising, dance halls, nightclubs and other forms of conspicuous consumption were highly developed features of Shanghai life. In the view of the Communist Party, Shanghai was a parasitic, consumer city (**xiaofei chengshi**) (see Gaulton 1981: 46). When the troops of the People's Liberation Army walked into Shanghai many citizens were struck by their simple, frugal and unadorned (**jianpu**) appearance. This was the ethos which was to dominate China, in rhetorical terms if not always in practice, with varying degrees of intensity for the next three decades. In Shanghai, of all places in China, this constituted a significant break from the past.

An interrelated set of political, economic, ideological, moral and social factors precluded the emergence of consumerism in Maoist China. All persons were assigned a class label and, in many respects, these defined the opportunities available to people. Expressions of allegiance to and compliance with the prevailing ideology were frequently demanded of citizens. Economic policies stressed heavy industry and capital investment,

and there was a "two-decade-long policy of sacrificing consumption (including consumer goods, housing, and services)" (Chan 1994: 97).[1] A common refrain was that "during the Cultural Revolution shops remained open, but there was nothing to buy." In addition to a severely limited range of consumer goods, wage levels were relatively egalitarian and generally low - a situation summed up in a satirical expression of that time "long live 36¥!" (**san shi liu kuai wansui**). Advertising was severely curtailed from the 1950s until the late 1970s and "castigated...as the apotheosis of the capitalist religion of consumption" (Stross 1990: 485). Moreover, the ethos of the period discouraged conspicuous consumption and "bourgeois" habits and lifestyles - drinking coffee and raising goldfish were two examples I was told about. At least some informants believed that Mao Zedong used poverty and the "closed door policy" as part of a deliberate strategy of keeping the people in ignorance (**yumin zhengce**), all the better to maintain his own position of power.

At its most intense the prevailing ideology had much in common with that of the Puritans in seventeenth century England. Clothing was functional and personal adornment discouraged. It has been remarked that fluctuations in the stress on conformity were most readily apparent in the number of women with permed hair (Honig & Hershatter 1988: 42). In Life And Death In Shanghai, Nien Cheng writes that during the Cultural Revolution "[o]ne could no longer assess a man's station in life by his clothes in China because everybody tried to dress like a proletarian" (1986: 11).[2] Revolutionary operas were encouraged over dancing and love songs, sexual behaviour was subject to highly conservative control.[3] At times coercion was used to ensure conformity. A female informant, for instance, recalled seeing young women being publicly humiliated in the late 1960s by having the legs of trousers considered too fashionable cut open.[4]

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[1]See Penelope Prime (1989) on the relationship between "curtailed consumption and leisure" and the Maoist policies of self reliance and a stress upon heavy industrial growth.

[2]This comment provides evidence of the flux in Maoist China - the implication here is that one *could* assess "a man's station in life by his clothes" before the Cultural Revolution. It was, after all, during the Cultural Revolution that "the virtue of austerity reached its pinnacle" (Prime 1989: 146). In addition, it is important to note that distinctions in dress still persisted, but became much more subtle. For instance, the number of pens in a person's pocket could display their status. I have also noticed that informants could often pick out Chinese officials by recognizable physical mannerisms such as bodily posture and gestures.

[3]From the memoirs of Mao's physician these restrictions appear not to have applied to Mao himself (Li 1994).

[4]Nien Cheng also recalls seeing this and women having permed hair cut off (1986: 65-6). However, I would add that both these incidents have become "myth-stories" in Shanghai - everybody seemed to know of them, but few could state categorically that they had witnessed them.

Highly developed organisational and surveillance structures reaching into every work place and residential area, facilitated by the high population density, and a cultural stress against individual expression all acted to ensure a high level of conformity. Since wage levels were relatively similar and alternative sources of income extremely limited people could readily assess the income level of neighbours and would be suspicious if they bought expensive items. A family who bought a colour television set in the 1970s before most of their neighbours told me that they did their best to keep this acquisition a secret.

David Parkin has written of "peoples' propensity continually to make themselves different through objects" (1993: 79). During the Cultural Revolution, in particular, it appears that the reverse situation generally applied - Chinese people had to make themselves (appear) the *same* - and, of course, markedly different from foreigners and "capitalist" consumers - through objects. Since the death of Mao, people once again may assert distinctive identities through consumption.

5.2 Revolutionary Slogans To Advertising Jingles - The Re-emergence of Consumerism

During the reform era most of the factors which prevented the emergence of a popular consumer society have been either radically changed or, at least, undermined. There has been a profound shift from "deferred gratification" (Croll 1994: 11) to a stress upon consumption and material rewards in the present. Compared to the Maoist period there is a far greater range of consumer products available, extensive promotion of these products through media images and increasing numbers of people can afford these items. Some informants noted modest improvements in their standard of living as early as 1972 but most located significant changes as beginning in the 1980s and especially after 1991.

My impression and that of various informants is that by the late Cultural Revolution the Communist Party had lost much of its moral authority (see also Madsen 1984). Wholehearted, or at least grudging, expressions of support by the populace for Party slogans had gradually given way to ritual observance, feigned compliance, even irony, ridicule, contempt and sheer boredom. The demonstrations of Spring 1989 across China, the collapse of regimes in Eastern Europe and the break-up of the Soviet Union concentrated the minds of China's leaders. After three decades of shifting ideological campaigns the Party had lost the ability to use revolutionary rhetoric and political campaigns to spur the masses. Instead the Party elite perceives the best hope for its own

survival as lying in increasing the economic prosperity of the populace - to adapt Marx, the hope is that material prosperity will act as the opium of the masses. As Geremie Barmé writes, "under the regime of the reforms and the awesome spectre of the dwindling communist world, economic viability and constant images of prosperity - in the streets and shops as well as on television - are also crucial to the Party's legitimacy" (1992: 13.19).

In this new scenario economic life is increasingly depoliticized. In Deng Xiaoping's most famous aphorism: "It doesn't matter if the cat is black or white so long as it catches mice." In the early 1990s, Deng reiterated this view, now not even bothering to use metaphor, in his widely publicised remark that: "It doesn't matter if something is called 'socialism' or 'capitalism' (**buguan xing 'she', xing 'zi'**) so long as it increases the prosperity of the common people." The changed emphasis is symbolically manifested in China's bank notes. Gone are depictions of happy workers engaged in production - a nickname for the former ten *yuan* note was the "great unity" (**da tuanjie**) so called because it had a portrait of a worker, a peasant and a solider. In their place are romanticized portraits of ethnic minorities and, rather ironically in view of the "Open Door" policy, the Great Wall.

One informant remarked that pre-reform China had a political economy (**zhengzhi jingji**), but now the economy is omnipotent (**jingji wanneng**). With the increased marketization of the economy - officially described as a "socialist market economy" - there is much greater stress upon the production of consumer goods (see Robinson 1985) and increased competition between both producers and retailers.[5] The Communist Party's former stress upon egalitarianism has been jettisoned and is now criticized. An article in China Daily observed, "the idea of equal shares for all has been shattered."[6] Instead, some may "get rich first" and income differentials diverge.[7]

Income levels generally have risen in Shanghai and there is an increasingly large

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[5]In 1952, the tertiary sector accounted for 41.7% of Shanghai's industrial product but after 1956 this proportion declined to just 18.2% in 1970 (Jacobs & Hong 1994: 226). From the early 1980s this trend has been reversed and the stated aim is for the tertiary sector to account for 45% of Shanghai's GNP by 2000. By 1988 the individual sector had 17.8% of retail sales compared to just 0.1% in 1978 and 2.9% in 1982 (Young 1991: 120).

[6]"Money Fever Becomes Epidemic in China" CD 15 July 1993: 4.

[7]Bonus payments (**jiangjin**) are subject to a much greater degree of variation and are often much higher than basic salaries (**gongzi**). For example, in one university, 1993 Spring Festival bonuses varied from 300¥ to 3,000¥ in different departments.

number of wealthy individuals.[8] The *Kleinwort Benson Investment Bank* estimated that 5-15% of Shanghai households have an income between 5,220-10,730¥ and constitute a "consumer market".[9] In addition, ration coupons are no longer necessary to buy products. Chinese newspapers described a "consuming passion"[10] and "shopping craze"[11] in places such as Shanghai. In the year to October 1993 retail sales were up 25.1% over the previous year.[12] During the early 1990s numerous jewellery shops opened in Shanghai - China recently became the world's largest gold consumer.[13] Despite this, for most households buying items such as a colour television involved a lengthy period of saving. The money used may be described as saved from "the mouth not eating it" (**zuili bu chi**) or the "gaps between the teeth" (**yachi feng**).

Before the reform era consumer goods purchased in China were invariably home produced and the highest cachet accorded those marked "Made in Shanghai". However, by the mid-1980s [f]oreign consumer goods [had] replaced Shanghai products at the top of the status list" (Hooper 1985: 143). The two largest stores in China are both on Shanghai's Nanjing Road - the *No 1 Department Store* and the *Hualian Commercial Building.*[14] Since the early 1980s the re-internationalization of Shanghai has allowed an increasing influx of foreign consumer items from everyday commodities such as soap and toothbrushes to *Pierre Cardin* suits and *Rolex* watches.[15] Foreign retailers have been

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[8]A tax inspector told me that the average salary in Shanghai was 7-800¥ pcm. In 1993, personal tax (**geren shui**) began at a rate of 5% on amounts above 620¥ pcm. Only basic salary and bonuses are taxable, income from second jobs was tax free. A household's income is much influenced by the life stage cycle of the family. For example, a family with working adult offspring will be far better off than one with a dependent child.

[9]Figures cited in Ho & Leigh (1994: 28). Kleinwort's estimate that the number of households in this income range is growing at a rate of 25% each year.

[10]"Consuming Passion Hits The Populous" CDBW 14-20 February 1993: 8.

[11]For example, "Big Cities Go Shopping Mad" CD 22 February 1993: 6.

[12]"Locals earn more and spend more" SS 26 November 1993. This article states that the average local citizen earned 370¥ pcm.

[13]"Gold King" CDBW 16-22 May 1993: 8.

[14]In 1992, the *No 1 Department Store* had a turnover of 1,350¥m and *Hualian* 1,035¥m (Ho & Leigh 1994: 26).

[15]In the first four months of 1993 "huge domestic market demand for foreign products" led to a 24.7% increase in imports compared with the same period in 1992 ("Imports Up" CDBW 16-22 May 1993: 8).

keen to exploit and promote the "virtual explosion of consumer spending" in the city.[16] Since June 1992 foreign companies have been allowed to participate in the retail sector (see Ho & Leigh 1994). As a result companies such as the Hong Kong retailer *Sincere* opened a new department store on Nanjing Road and Japan's *Yaohan Department Store* signed a US $100 million joint venture agreement to build a 120,000m² shopping centre in Pudong (Ibid). Chinese shoppers eagerly flock to these "new cathedrals" of consumerism (Tomlinson 1990b: 70) where "the increasingly sophisticated display of goods...encourages voyeuristic consumption" (Featherstone 1991: 173). A **Xinmin Wanbao** article titled "Without Leaving The National Gate One Can Buy Many Famous Foreign Commodities" quotes the approval expressed by "customers who wear famous brand name clothing and pay attention to rank (**jiang dangci**)."[17]

Alongside rising incomes and the increased availability of consumer products was a recognition that one of the new demands of the "socialist market economy" was to learn how to become a consumer. An article in **Xinmin Wanbao**, for example, discussed various opinions on children's **yasuiqian**, the money given to children at Spring Festival. One parent suggested ending the practice, another disagreed arguing that "consumption is a branch of learning...which requires studying in the environment of the commodity and market economy."[18]

The resurgent advertising industry (see Stross 1990) is eager to take up this "educative" role.[19] In late twentieth century consumerism, media derived images play a vital role in valuations and notions surrounding products. Advertising is "one of the central purveyors of the new consumer culture values" (Featherstone 1991: 173). Mike Featherstone's description of developments in advertising in 1920s America is remarkably appropriate to post-Mao China. He writes that through the new mass media "[w]orkers who had become used to the rhetoric of thrift, hard work and sobriety, had to become 'educated' to appreciate a new discourse centred around the hedonistic lifestyle entailing new needs and desires" (1991: 172). Clearly, astute marketing by Western and other

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[16]Quote from Ron Cromie, general manager of Hong Kong-based advertising firm J. Walter Thompson China, cited in "Building For A Billion: China's Rising Consumers Lure Developers" FEER 16-7-1992: 41-2.

[17]"**Bu Chu Guomen Ye Neng Maidao Bu Shao Waiguo Mingpin**" XMWB 23 February 1993: 8.

[18]"**Yasuiqian De Sikao**" (Considerations On Money Given To Children For New Year's Gifts) XMWB 3 March 1993: 13.

[19]According to Stross (1990: 486), advertising made its first major reappearance in China on the first day of Chinese New Year in 1979, when Shanghai's **Jiefang Ribao** (Liberation Daily) carried a series of advertisements for consumer products.

advertisers explicitly seeks to fuel the "aspirations, dreams, and fantasies" of consumers (Tomlinson 1990a: 10).

On the basis of frequent comments made to me by Chinese television viewers, I can attest to the accuracy of Catherine Meek's suggestion that "[t]he popularity of Western goods as communicators of both material success and of style may be due in no small part to the sophistication of Western, as compared with Chinese advertising" (1993: 20). However, I would locate advertising within a much broader increase in the range and diversity of images purveyed through mass media in the reform era including magazines, films and television programmes. These images often implicity promote the lifestyles of wealthy Americans and overseas Chinese and the consumerism associated with them. In these programmes the "furniture, house decoration, cars, clothing, eating and drinking habits, the 'look' of the characters... creates images of life-styles which are perceived as being desirable in the eyes of the viewers" (Bocock 1993: 93). The subtlety of these influences makes them at least as powerful as advertisements in promoting consumerist lifestyles. In a complex interplay media images stimulate, form and articulate consumer desires. At the same time they create, fuel, and define standards of success and provide patterns of ways of life (ways of consuming) that many Shanghainese aspire to and seek to emulate.

It would be tempting to consider the predominance of Western and Japanese products as symbols of success as an example of "cultural imperialism". In chapter two I noted the frequent congruence in everyday discourse between "the West" (**xifang**) and economic modernization/modernity (**xiandaihua**).[20] I would argue that the Chinese state actively engages in sustaining (and, perhaps, creating) this conception by utilizing the success of Western products in China as propaganda tools to advertise its own success. State rhetoric now emphasises, above all, economic development and popular perceptions are that "the West" has already achieved this goal. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that Chinese people adopt as their own the symbols of success in the West. A China Daily article on fashion in China demonstrates this point.[21] In 1978, Pierre Cardin was the first overseas designer to visit China and "[h]is name is now known to many ordinary Chinese." Cardin's success is taken as evidence that "China enjoys rapid economic growth", events such as Cardin's first fashion show in China "proved that China had gained international

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[20]Stross remarks that Chinese advocates of reintroducing advertising stressed that "China needed advertising to be scientific and modern" (1990: 489).

[21]"China Vogue For Fashion" CD 20 May 1993: 5.

recognition in fashion." In this article as in many others, the Western gaze is invoked. Foreign visitors are described as "amazed" that the "the daily attire worn by people is so colourful and diversified." The significance of "the West" may be particularly important in Shanghai. Many Shanghainese compare their city to Hong Kong or New York - an article in a local newspaper approvingly described Shanghainese as "China's Americans" (**Zhongguo de Meiguoren**).[22]

The rise of popular consumerism was inescapable on *Shanghai Oriental* radio station which devoted abundant airtime to consumer programmes. These included advice on consumer issues, product care and availability. A particularly interesting development was the proliferation of live phone-ins devoted to these issues - these substantially increased the presence of the Shanghai dialect on local media. These programmes constitute not only cheap programming and publicity for stores but also education on being "consumers". Experiences in the "West" were often inveigled. For instance, much mention was made of the "Western" saying that "the customer is God". This was contrasted to the experience of Shanghai shoppers who have become used to sullen and off-hand treatment by sales staff.

5.3 Commercialism, Commodification and Consumerism

The rise of popular consumerism during the reform era is part of a general increase in commercialism and commodification. These trends affected many aspects of life in Shanghai from education, leisure, housing, journalism and medical services to weddings and funerals. In the case of the latter one elderly man, reflecting upon the increasing cost of funerals, told me that he "could not afford to die" (**sibuqi**). Commercialism was apparent in the increasing number of private enterprises and trading activities by units as diverse as schools, local government departments, research academies such as the Shanghai Social Science Academy, the police and the military.

In education parents were expected to make much higher contributions to their children's schooling. In 1993, two Shanghai universities (Foreign Languages School and the Business School) raised their fees to 2,000¥ per term. A teacher estimated that it costs a parent 10,000-30,000¥ to support a child for a four year university degree course. Recently established private schools and universities were often even more expensive. There was also a common belief that teachers now needed to be given gifts in order to take greater interest in pupils.

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[22]"**Dushi Liuxing Da Zhanwang**" (Forecasting Metropolitan Fashions) SWYB 5 March 1993: 2.

Leisure was being commoditized. Until the last decade cinemas were the main location for paid leisure activities. Since the mid-1980s numerous dance halls and over 1,000 karaoke had opened in Shanghai. Attempts were also being made to foster a housing market.[23] The rent of one typical flat I visited had increased from 3¥ to 27¥ pcm over one year from 1992. In the media, the acceptance by journalists of gifts to promote commercial products had become so widespread that in 1993 a highly publicized campaign was launched against this practice. There were also "brokers" who, for a fee, used their connections to place advertisements disguised as news items in the media.

With the commodification and commercialization of the economy old types of behaviour may take on new meanings. Many **danwei** have periodically issued employees with items which were unavailable or which required ration cards, for instance, "patriotic fish" (**aiguo yu**) and other foodstuffs at Spring Festival. During 1992-4 this practice persisted and had become even more widespread. For example, in the space of a few months a young architectural worker's **danwei** issued cases of *Qingdao* beer, Yantai apples, *Rejoice* shampoo, a 200¥ box of foreign biscuits, mattresses, frying pans and *Oil of Ulan* (*sic*) moisturizing cream. In some instances, these are gifts from other **danwei** - this unit had projects in both Qingdao and Yantai. Another important objective in the 1990s is tax avoidance. At a school which was making substantial profits from subsidiary enterprises great ingenuity was employed in distributing profits to the staff in kind rather than in taxable salary payments. A teacher detailed for me a myriad of free products, meals, holidays and "bonuses" for every conceivable festive occasion.

5.3.1 Consumption As The Measure Of Progress

For most people I spoke with the meaning of **gaige kaifang** was higher incomes, the emergence of numerous free markets with abundant and good quality produce and the possibility of acquiring consumer durables. A retired teacher told me that "**gaige kaifang** is better than previous policies. In the 1970s and early 1980s the **laobaixing** never imagined that their homes could have a fridge, television and video. After a few years of **gaige kaifang** every family bought electrical goods.[24] The ordinary **laobaixing** are relatively satisfied. We eat more dishes (**cai**) and less rice. Now sea food is common,

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[23]For example, see "Increase Rents To Sell Homes Says Newspaper" CD 10 September 1993: 4. This article suggested that rents should be raised at least sixfold to promote the sale of residential housing.

[24]By 1989, more than 80% of Shanghai families owned a refrigerator, 93% of these had been bought in the previous five years and over 18% were imported (CD Shanghai Focus "Facts And Figures" 19 March 1989: 2).

before there was only pork." Official rhetoric that the aim of these policies is to increase the standard of living of the common people is clearly an extremely potent and powerful force.

Standards of living were described in the press and by people I spoke with according to four different levels.[25] One informant described them in ascending order as follows: **chichuan** - one has clothing and can eat until 70-80% full; **wenbao** - dress warmly and eat one's fill; **xiaokang** - have a cash surplus, an annual income of US $1,000, one is "more free" (**gengjia ziyou**);[26] **fuyou** - can afford to buy a house and car, "like developed (**fada**) countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom." He considered that if only around 20% of a family's income went on food it was "wealthy" and if 40-50% went on food it was rather badly off."[27] The objective for 1995 is that the average annual salary in Shanghai will be 10,000¥, more than double the 1993 average.

A Shanghainese economics professor considered that until the late 1980s the main concern in Shanghai was still **wenbao**, now many households were approaching the comfortable state. He estimated that 5-10% of households were now rich (**fuyou**), 20% comfortably off and 5% had a declining standard of living. An indication of the move away from a subsistence economy was the declining use of the traditional greeting "have you eaten?" (*nong vɛ tci ku le va*/**ni chiguo fan ma**). In the Chinese countryside this expression is still widely used, but in Shanghai tended to be used only by older people. Most Shanghainese used the term *nong ho*/**ni hao**? (literally "you good") as a greeting.[28]

Older people generally expressed their relative contentment. As a retired man told me, the "ordinary **laobaixing** are relatively satisfied now, their demands are low because they are accustomed to poverty (**qiongguan**)." However, younger people often did not share this sense of contentment. The demand for consumer products has rapidly increased during the reform era and, as this speaker remarked himself, young people who had grown

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[25]The criteria for these categorizations are reminiscent of those used by advertisers in their targeting of potential customers.

[26]The equation of "freedom" (**ziyou**) with economic prosperity is interesting. My understanding is that freedom from worry about food and clothing is implied.

[27]An "ordinary" family of three told me that they spent about 3-400¥ pcm on basic necessities. Rent for their 27m² flat was 20¥ pcm - one twentieth of the husband's salary. Water cost a few *yuan* per month, electricity 10-20¥, gas c20¥ - a total of 50-60¥ pcm. The telephone cost 18¥ pcm. About 6¥ per day was spent on food. Food comprised 60% of total expenditure.

[28]Amongst the young it became fashionable from the mid-1980s to use the English "bye, bye" when leaving.

up in the relatively affluent 1980s and 90s had much higher consumer demands. An article in Wenhui Film Times commented that in the 1950s and 60s the consumer items people sought cost in the region of 100¥ - a watch, bicycle and a sewing machine and in the 1970s and 80s in the region of 1,000¥ - a colour television, fridge and washing machine.[29] This article considered that there were no comparable "big three items" (**san da jian**) in the 1990s, although housing, cars, home decoration, air-conditioners and travel were mentioned.[30] It suggested that this is partly because some of these items were far too expensive for most households and also because people no longer "follow the crowd (**pailang**)" but, rather, "choose an individualistic lifestyle" (**gexinghua de shenghuo fangshi**). This article added that there was also the "magical and colourful world" (**shenqi secai de shijie**) of the **dakuan**, **dawan** and **dahu** [all meaning "rich person"] names which "signify mobile phones, high class clothing, famous brand cars, villas with a garden and enough money to spend it freely." Similarly, an article in **Xinmin Wanbao** expressed the view that the "new wealthy strata" (**xin fu jieceng**) now had a strong interest in buying cars.[31] Even amongst those on more average incomes house ownership was becoming an aspiration. A man who had worked as a tax inspector for 30 years told me that although people like himself could not yet afford to buy a house that he now had this wish (**yuanwang**). His 30m² flat would cost about 4-50,000¥.

Although many people I spoke with considered the rise of consumerism indicative of progress there were oppositional voices. A common complaint was that those who relied upon salaries (**kao gongzi chifan**) could not afford many of the items in the shops or enjoy the proliferation of entertainments such as karaoke. Still less could they afford the "flood of consuming famous brand names" which are "gushing" into Shanghai.[32] One informant noted that he saw consumption levels increase whilst he collected his pension and his income decreased. Some informants described the vast increase in restaurant consumption as "abnormal" (**bu zhengchang**) and beyond the pockets of ordinary salaried

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[29]"**Jiushi Niandai Xiaofeichao Toushi**" (Perspectives On The Consumer Flood In The Nineties) WHDYSB 5 June 1993: 7.

[30]In interviews, frequently mentioned candidates as **xin san jian** were air-conditioner, computer, stereo system and microwave.

[31]"**Quan Guo Yi You 'Sijiache' 37,000 Liang**" (The Entire Country Already Has 37,000 'Private Cars') XMWB 11 January 1993: 2.

[32]"**Mingpai Xiaofeichao Nengfou Chijiu?**" (Can the Flood of Consuming Famous Brand Names Endure?) WHB 13 May 1993: 7.

people.[33] Lavish restaurant eating was associated primarily with private entrepreneurs, the (mis)use of public funds or, more generally, "abnormal income" (**bu zhengchang shouru**).

The reappearance of inflation in the reform era was a source of concern, especially for those on fixed incomes and the elderly in particular.[34] It was suggested to me that the reappearance of inflation lay behind the dialect slang term which called a 10¥ note one **fen** (*yi zang fen*/**yi zhang fen**) - there are one hundred **fen** to the *yuan*. A concomitant of the "market economy" was that food prices now varied daily and store prices were no longer fixed but differed from store to store. Memories of stable incomes and prices and the general perception of limited corruption during the Maoist era often constituted a source for comparison. Discontent over official corruption and inflation was a significant factor behind the 1989 demonstrations. Fear of inflation was also cited as a spur to consumption by creating a desire to spend **Renminbi** before it depreciated in value.

The commercialization, increased levels of consumption and availability of consumer products associated with **gaige kaifang** brought an "economic pressure" (**jingji yali**). Media and advertising images spurred new wants and there was increased social pressure to keep up with one's peers. A university professor reflected on the way the media "continually promotes high class products." He commented that his own income was above average but that these goods were way beyond his price range. He wondered, "if such products are affordable by only a very small group of people in Shanghai, why is there so much promotion of them?"

Those who "relied on a salary to eat" often had to find a second job or source of income in order to acquire the consumer durables now considered essential for happiness and well-being. For instance, a worker in a state **danwei** told me that "now without outside income (**waikuai**) in Shanghai one is very poor." This pressure to make money was associated with what a deputy restaurant manageress described as an increasing pressure of material goods (**wuzhi de yali**). Formerly a university lecturer, this woman had changed careers because of this pressure. As a lecturer her salary had been just 300¥ a month but she wanted to enjoy expensive entertainments such as karaoke and buy expensive consumer goods. She mentioned also a "clothing pressure" (**fuzhuang yali**) with

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[33]There were, of course, many different types and style of restaurant and eating place from simple stalls by the side of the road with just a single bucket to wash the dishes to the most luxuriant of restaurants.

[34]Although pensions are raised each April they tend not to keep pace with inflation. In 1993, when inflation was around 20% they rose by 10%.

a desire to wear famous brand (**mingpai**) clothing such as *Nike* shoes which cost 600¥. These comments provide evidence of the double-edged quality of a monetized economy (cf. Miller 1987, Simmel 1990). Money brings both the social advantages of freedom but also new stresses and constraints. It is to the re-monetizing of Shanghai that I now turn.

5.3.2 The God Of Wealth Returns To Shanghai

An important feature associated with the rise of consumerism, commercialism and commodification was the new significance of money. Before the reform era, low wages, a reliance upon payment in kind (such as housing), a limited choice of consumer goods and rationing made China if not a demonetized economy then at least reduced the importance of money. Daniel Miller writes of the way that "[i]n a non-monetized society, the individual is likely to be tied to activities which are far more tightly constrained by necessities of everyday life" (1987: 74). Although Miller is describing "traditional" societies, I consider that this is a helpful insight into the lack of freedom people described to me in pre-reform Shanghai.

By 1992-4 money was receiving far greater prominence. I asked a young worker in a joint venture what he considered the meaning of "**gaige**" (reform). He replied simply, "make money". I then asked what he understood by "**kaifang**" (the "Open Door" policy). The answer, once again, was "make money". For this young man it would seem that "the substitution of money payment for payment in kind secures the liberation of the individual" (Simmel 1990: 288). There were, however, many critical assessments of this new prominence of money. An article in China Daily commented that the socio-economic changes had "revolutionized attitudes toward wealth" and that Chinese people had no choice but to become "money conscious".[35] In certain cases this was said to have given rise to "worshipping money", "idolatry of money" and "moral degeneration" (Ibid). My informants could all cite instances of this and felt that China had become a far more materialistic society, one in which "everybody grabs" (**da jia na**).[36]

Official pronouncements condemning such worship of money and stressing the need for "spiritual civilization" (**jingshen wenming**) were, in my experience, either ignored entirely, regarded as empty words (**konghua**) or as hypocritical. In the television series

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[35]"Money Fever Becomes Epidemic in China" CD 15 July 1993: 4.

[36]This term is a re-ordering of the Chinese name for Canada - **Jianada**.

Heshang, it was said of Chinese rulers that "while some people exert their full strength to criticize western life-styles and values, yet they themselves would never refuse to enjoy those super-deluxe limousines and high-class consumer goods" (Su & Wang 1991: 151). These criticisms were frequently echoed in the comments of my informants.

It seemed to me that intellectuals in particular often still retained at least a rhetorical disdain for money. For instance, a university graduate who was now a successful businesswoman described to me her dislike of businessmen. She described them as having **tongchouwei** - literally the "stink of money". This would seem to be an example of the way notions of cultural distinction (cf. Bourdieu 1984) are invoked - this women stressed her affinity to "cultured people" (**wenren**). In this instance, cultural taste was contrasted with the actual taste of money - one may have money but should not "smell" of it.

A pun was often made on the Communist Party's call for people to look toward the future - **xiang qian kan**, a homonym of this is "look toward money". The suggestion is that people are more concerned to make money in the present than to place their faith in an uncertain future. An illuminating event occurred when I visited the home of a retired car mechanic. I was met near the block by a young cousin who led the way. I was told that before carrying out this errand the young boy had asked for a one *mao* "labour fee" (**laowufei**). The family considered this an indication of the changes wrought by the reforms. The retired worker noted that in the past there were only "spiritual" (**jingshen**) rewards, but now material (**wuzhi**) rewards were essential. His wife added that during the reform era there is less feeling (**ganqing**) among Shanghainese because "everyone is going into business" (**jingshang**)."

Money in Shanghai had various "Chinese characteristics". There were few credit facilities and banks generally did not lend money to individuals. Instead funds were borrowed from family, friends and sometimes **danwei**. This situation was described to me by a Shanghai economics professor as an instance of the way that China, in contrast to the West, is a "human feeling" (**renqing**) country.

The power of money was frequently mentioned. A state **danwei** salesman noted a traditional saying: If you have money you can make ghosts turn the millstone (**you qian neng shi gui tui mo**) whilst a 1990s version people may even say: If you have money you can make the millstone turn the ghost (**you qian neng shi mo tui gui**). The increasingly vital role of money was evident in the revival of expressions such as **pulu** - literally "to spread the path/road)" (see chapter 4). A school teacher who had played a part in setting up a commercial restaurant which had been opened by the school told me that much

"spreading of the path" had been necessary. In opening the restaurant people from various authorities had to be invited to eat in order to obtain their permission or cooperation. Each set of diners had to be invited separately so that they did not meet. It was also necessary to invite these people for meals at regular intervals to ensure their continuing cooperation. Two teachers had taken on the role of organizing these activities. My informant noted that at first these teachers had been rather naive. For instance, they had not known how to eat certain types of food. He commented "now they really know how to eat."

Another pre-1949 term which was regaining popularity was **shaoxiang** - "burn incense". An informant noted that one burns incense to bodhisattva (**pusa**). In this case **pusa** are officials and to **shaoxiang** is to give them gifts. Spring Festival appeared to be a time for much "incense burning". At this time in 1993, an informant assured me, restaurant owners in Zhapu Road each had to buy 1,000¥ worth of firecrackers from the local police - alongside regular free meals - in order to secure their protection. The tradition of giving money to children wrapped inside a red packet (**hongbao**) at Spring Festival also served as a cover for **shaoxiang**. In 1993, a sum between 10¥ and 100¥ was usual. If the amount enclosed was very large the parent of the child to whom the **hongbao** was given "would know what this meant" (**xinli you shu** - literally "have the numbers in their heart"). One informant considered that during the 1990s there had been a change in **shaoxiang**. Until the early 1970s officials were afraid to accept bribes and people afraid to offer them. Then bribes in the form of gifts such as *Maotai* alcohol became acceptable. Most recently cash payments had become common and increasingly officials would state how much they wanted before helping somebody. A commonly heard term in business negotiations was **yanjiu** - "investigate". A popular pun was a homonym of this term "cigarettes and alcohol", people spoke of the need for this type of "investigation" in order to conclude a deal or solve a problem. The government's anti-corruption campaigns were widely regarded as futile, corruption was considered as endemic and to spread from the highest echelons of society downwards.

Westerners who visit China have often been surprised by the close questioning they receive from local people over their incomes. As income differentials within China diverged and sources of income proliferated a distinct shift was detectable in this sphere. The former transparency and openness over incomes was being replaced by secrecy and conjecture. What was once public knowledge was now entering an increasingly privatized zone. Bonuses and especially the **hongbao** which were handed out at various festival occasions were popularly termed **mohu gongzi** - indistinct or blurred salary. The giving

of **hongbao**, the contents of which were secret, engendered complaints about unfairness because, as one man told me, "they may have human feeling inside them" (**renqing zai limian**). That is, the money is given for personal motives and not based upon ability or performance at work.

The new striving for wealth was symbolized in the return of a pre-1949 custom on the fourth day of the lunar New Year to welcome (**jie**) **Caishen** - the God of Wealth. Traders set off firecrackers and bought large carp (**liyu**). The carp is considered the lucky (**jixiang**) since its name "**li**" is a homonym of the **li** in **lixi** (interest). This tradition was dormant until recent years both because it was frowned upon and since there were few private stores. The main display of firecrackers on this occasion was on Zhapu Road a street now almost entirely occupied by **getihu** restaurants.

5.3.3 Points of Consumption

Conspicuous consumption by most people is concentrated during a particular part of the life cycle, namely unmarried young adults and couples on the point of marriage.[37] In each of these stages consumption had considerably inflated in recent years. Expenditure on leisure and clothing were especially associated with unmarried youth and often related to courtship. Some cynics suggested that the whole enterprise of dating (**tan lianai** - "talking love") had become commercialized and was now "talking business" (**tan shengyi**). A retired woman in her late fifties divided courtship (**tan lianai**) into three phases and noted that each phase is marked by a different pattern of consumption. In the first phase (**chulian**) "consumption is especially high." In the past couples used to visit parks or cinemas. Now they were likely to eat at restaurants or visit karaoke. Such expenditure gradually declined through the middle phase (**zhonglian**). As the relationship entered its final phase (**wanlian**) the couple prepare to marry and set up a home (**chengjia**). A young man's suggestion to his girlfriend that they buy furniture is tantamount to a proposal of marriage.

The boyfriend who spends lavishly trying to impress his girlfriend was a popular stereotype. Some joked that he is "under the order of the soup" (**tang si ling**). This expression is a pun upon the name of a character - General Tang (i.e. **Tang siling**) - who featured in a film shown early in the reform era. The homonym expresses the idea that the young man eats only soup so as to save money to lavish on his girlfriend. A

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[37]See, for instance, "Shoppers Busy Stocking Up On Electrical Goods" CDBW 16-22 May 1993: 8. On courtship generally see Honig & Hershatter (1988: 81-136).

prospective son-in-law, called a **maojiao nuxu** - "hairy-legged son-in-law" - in Shanghai, is expected to *gue pa dü*/**guai paitou** - display style/show off his wealth - by providing gifts for his prospective parents-in-law. Some parents were considered especially greedy (**tanxin**) and to decide if their daughter could marry the young man depending upon the quantity of gifts he brings on his visits.

From the late 1950s and especially during the Cultural Revolution families were discouraged from holding lavish wedding feasts (Parish & Whyte 1984: 139). Instead, the Communist Party tried to popularize simple and frugal "wedding tea parties". Wedding feasts continued on a reduced scale but by the 1970s had "retreated back into the home" (Ibid). In the mid-1970s Parish and Whyte found that expenditure by the male side totalled three to five months income for the average family (1984: 136-7, note 34). Although the government still warned against extravagance (see Honig & Hershatter 1988: 147-55), in the early 1990s most of the former socio-political restraints had been removed and there was considerable social pressure to hold a wedding feast and acquire the requisite array of consumer durables for the new marital home. It would, for instance, "lose face" (*te de*/**shi mianzi**) if the couple did not have a new colour television set with at least a 21" screen. On wedding days a new home is packed with goods from the traditional eight quilts piled up on the bed to video players and television sets, the larger the better.

A typical wedding meal I attended cost 9,000¥ and a further 30,000¥ was spent on consumer items. In 1988, an average of 13,186¥ was spent on wedding ceremonies, almost double that of 1987.[38] Parents paid half of this figure. The annual average wage was then 2,181¥ per year. The cost of the wedding feast itself may be offset by the gifts of money brought by the diners. Guests generally gave a sum of money enclosed in a red envelope (**hongbao**). In 1993, an average gift was 100¥ per person.[39] It was often remarked that the hosts "made a profit" on the wedding meal. It was widely believed that extra guests were invited to make money.

The rise of popular consumerism can be charted in the requirements of young couples who set up home (**chengjia**). In the early 1970s the items they bought comprised the "thirty six legs" - a table, four chairs, bed, sofa, chest of draws, wardrobe. Subsequently it was the "four machines" - television, tape recorder, camera and sewing

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[38]CD Shanghai Focus "Facts And Figures" 19 March 1989: 2.

[39]This may constitute over one-third of a person's monthly salary. Wedding attendance could be a great financial burden especially if several friends married at around the same time. In 1993, the average salary was about 4,500¥ per year ("Family Finances Show Electrifying Changes" SS 16 July 1993: 11).

machine. Currently it is an air conditioner, video and television. In one flat I visited a large cardboard box graced the front room. It contained a huge, 29" *Phillips* colour television which had cost over 10,000¥. This had been bought by the fiance of the family's son - the couple planned to marry within the next two years. It had been decided that the girl should buy one "large item" (**da jian**) for her dowry. The son was expected to buy most of the other items which would cost a minimum of 3-40,000¥.[40] His parents would have to pay most of this and for costs such as a video of the wedding and decorating the new marital home. Although informants suggested that there was a tendency for a more equal level of contributions from the bride and groom's families than in the past, the male's side generally contributed more. Terminology drawn from computing was popularly used to describe the division of costs - the groom's side was responsible for the "hard ware" (**yingjian**) such as the television and video and the bride's for the "traditional" items of "soft ware" (**ruanjian**) such as bedding items.

Older informants suggested that the inflated requirements of weddings meant that children must now rely more upon their parents in order to get married. It was considered a moral imperative for parents to contribute even if they lacked these items themselves. Popular stereotypes depicted parents as having to eat frugally, wear old clothes and make do with a black and white television so as to raise the amount of money. The burden was especially great if a family had more than one son. In one instance in my acquaintance a man with two sons paid out 10,000¥ for the marriage of his first son in 1982 and 20,000¥ for the marriage of the second in 1992. Using a dialect term he commented that his "wealth (literally his "fat") has all gone" (*hiu si ma la*/**youshui meiyou le**). He did not envisage paying off the debts incurred until the child of the marriage was seven or eight years old. The high level of costs involved was suggested to me as one cause of later marriages in Shanghai. In this respect, it would seem that rising consumerism was increasing the dependency of young people on their parents.

5.4 Eating Culture

The tables were now covered with a profusion of small dishes, which contained all the finest fruits and vegetables of the season, besides many of the most expensive kinds of soups, such as the celebrated bird's nest and others, many of which were excellent even to the palate of an Englishman.

Robert Fortune (1853: Vol. I, 113)

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[40]In the mid-1970s, Parish and Whyte found that the items bought by the groom's side averaged 500-800¥ (1984: 136-7, note 3).

An occasional dish in Shanghai is "drunken shrimps". When faced with a steaming bowl of live shrimps, crustaceal arms and legs flailing in a salty, sable, alcoholic liquid and enjoined "eat quickly, while they are still alive!" one is reminded that notions of consumption are culturally constructed. This section explores indigenous notions connected literally, semantically or metaphorically with food and eating. This topic seems particularly important for a number of reasons. Firstly, foodstuffs are the most obvious items of consumption and in all human societies food consumption (and non-consumption) is imbued with cultural meanings. Secondly, in China, people frequently assert that food plays a central part in Chinese cultural life and speak, for instance, of an "eating culture" (**chi wenhua**). It is indicative that the Chinese measure word for people, **kou**, also means "mouth". A family, for instance, may be described as consisting of **wu kou** - five mouths. In everyday discourse notions connected with "eating" constitute a leitmotif through which people talk about, conceive and evaluate many aspects of the world around them. It may well be that "few other cultures are as food-orientated as the Chinese" (Chang 1977: 11). Thirdly, the provision of foodstuffs for the "family basket" has been a central concern of the Chinese state's project of "alimentary *perestroika*". Foods have been at the leading edge of the consumer revolution in Shanghai.

With the indigenous perception of the centrality of eating and the abundance of notions associated with it this subject provides a useful avenue through which to examine perceptions of the socio-economic changes now taking place in the city. I note the implication of foodstuffs and notions of "eating" in relationship to conceptions of the body and health, regional and national identities, the household, calendric events, and interpersonal relationships and behaviour. I then explore more extensively the relationship between Shanghai and the state and between individuals and the state.

5.4.1 Our Daily Rice

It is misleading to talk about Chinese "food". Instead, in everyday usage people speak of "Chinese rice" (**Zhongguo fan**). The Chinese term **chi** ("to eat") is embedded in an extensive semantic field with many more figurative and metaphorical senses than the English equivalent. Traditionally, foodstuffs have been located within an extensive range of ingested items in which medicines and ultimately cosmological notions are intertwined (e.g. see Anderson 1988, Anderson & Anderson 1975, Wolf 1974). It is notable that in the Shanghai dialect the range of "eaten" items is even more extensive than in **putonghua**. In the latter one "eats" (**chi**) rice and medicine, in the dialect **chi** also serves for beer,

coffee and cigarettes. In Chinese chess opponents' pieces are "eaten". In October 1993 I was in a share dealing centre when Shenzhen's Baoan Company tried to takeover Shanghai's *Yanzhong Company*. This first attempted takeover by one listed company of another was described to me as an attempt by one company to "eat" the other.

Food is a key marker through which Chinese and regional identities are expressed. Any researcher in China soon becomes aware of the seemingly endless discourse on food and eating. It does seem that "[f]or the Chinese... food is a central feature of ethnicity, a basic statement about what one *is*" (Anderson 1988: 211). Eating "Chinese food" in the correct way is a key component of "being Chinese". It is a prime instance of the way "consumption habits, deemed natural as skin, are criteria for membership and become weapons of exclusion" (Douglas & Isherwood 1978: 85). For instance, chopsticks are considered so "Chinese" that it is believed foreigners can scarcely learn to use them. Even people who knew I had been in China for over three years expressed surprise that I was able to manipulate chopsticks. During the peak of the Cultural Revolution when fierce campaigns sought to distinguish "enemies of the people" even such habits as drinking coffee and eating foreign foods could be used against someone as "weapons of exclusion".[41]

Cuisine plays a part in the construction of regional distinctions.[42] "Being Shanghainese" requires, for instance, wanting to eat the species of hairy crab caught in October and November. Anderson writes that during the colonial era Shanghai "developed the most eclectic of all China's cuisines, incorporating dishes and ingredients not only from every part of China but also from the West" (1988: 161). The taste of the West from before 1949 may still linger in people's memories. A woman who had lived in the vicinity of the American run St John's University still recalled with great fondness the taste of American chocolate from that time. As I noted in chapter two, informants compared the sophistication and Western orientation of Shanghai with its many Western restaurants such as the French-style *Red House* when compared, for instance, to tea-drinking Beijingers.

For its part, the state has used food to emphasize the poverty of many in pre-1949 China. A ritual was created using food as an instrument of propaganda to highlight the Communist Party's takeover of power as constituting a qualitative break with the past.

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[41]Such accusations were levelled against Nien Cheng (1986: 83).

[42]For example, see James Watson's (1987) description of Cantonese ritual banquets of eating from the "common pot" (**sihk puhn**) as a means of establishing an ethnic boundary from other, competing ethnic groups. See also Anderson & Anderson (1972).

Many informants recalled having eaten **yikufan**.[43] **Yiku** means to "recall one's suffering in the old society" and **yikufan** was a poor meal specially prepared to remind its consumers how people had suffered (**chiku** - "eat bitterness") before 1949. This ritual was intended to promote a common purpose and a sense of belonging to the Chinese nation, the "nation-family" (**guojia**). In contemporary Shanghai, some fashionable restaurants now serve such dishes - a clear instance of the way in which in "postmodern culture" [t]he past is raided...for commoditizable nostalgias" (Hannerz 1992: 35).

An important ingredient of being "a family" is the regular eating together of food cooked on the same stove, "the stove is the symbol of the living family" (Wolf 1968: 28). The core kin group are, above all, those who eat together on key ritual and festive occasions.[44] At Sunday lunchtime families may wrap dumplings together (cf. Watson 1987: 398). The roundness of the dumplings and the process of wrapping and consuming them which involves the whole family may be taken (by the consumers themselves as well as anthropologists) as symbolizing and reinforcing the unity of the family. At certain times of the year this commensality may extend to deceased family members. Several families told me that on particular festive days they lay a place at the table for deceased relatives (generally grandparents). Food is set out and windows left open so that their ghosts may come and join the meal.

Anthropologists have noted the structuring capacity of food (and other goods). For instance, it can be used to discriminate different times of the day, one day from another, annual events and life cycle rituals (Douglas & Isherwood 1978: 115-6). The role of food in life cycle, religious rituals and festive occasions in China has been well rehearsed (e.g. see Ahern 1973, Parish & Whyte 1978: 273-297, Thompson 1988, 1994, Wolf 1974). I therefore mention just a few instances of the specific place of food in Shanghai.

Shanghainese had a strong awareness of the importance of food in ritual and other occasions. As one informant commented, "it seems that in China, whatever the occasion, it always involves eating." Lunar New Year's Eve was described as a time when families

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[43]Presumably this is the same as the "class congee" made up of twigs, grass, soil and so on which Lynn White describes as being given to Shanghainese youth in order to show them how hard life had been "before Liberation" (1978: 80).

[44]See Elisabeth Croll's description of attempts made during the Great Leap Forward to socialise consumption by introducing community dining halls (1982: 341-363). One may, perhaps, consider this as an attempt to engender the kind of solidarity associated with the **sihk puhn** banquets described by Watson (1987).

should unite (**tuanyuan**) and **waike** - "outside guests" - should not visit.[45] The family eat and remain cloistered together until after the mid-day meal on New Year's Day. From then and for the next two days Shanghai is full of people carrying gifts especially bottles of alcohol bound together in pairs - even numbers indicate good luck - and large round Western-style cakes. Many people joked that the cakes, which cost around 35¥, are passed on from one household to another in a chain of reciprocity and rarely consumed since they ultimately go bad. As living standards have improved so the value placed upon Spring Festival appears to have changed. A young woman expressed the view that this festival was more important in the past. She recalled it as a time when people had better food to eat - **danwei** gave out special foods and extra ration coupons. However, people in Shanghai now eat well throughout the year. She considered the New Year's Eve television variety programme the most important aspect of the festival.

Each festive day has its special foods.[46] At Mid-Autumn Festival (**Zhongqiujie**), for instance, moon cakes, taro, lotus, water chestnuts and duck are eaten. Such foods invariably have stories and myths associated with them. As a person consumes such foods, ideally alongside other family members, these stories may be recalled or told to youngsters thereby incorporating them into the imagined Chinese community. In a sense they eat themselves into being "Chinese". One example is a festival one or two days before Qing Ming called **hanshi** (cold food). On this day one should eat only cold food. This derives from an event in the Spring and Autumn period when an upright scholar who had gone into hiding rather than compromise his principles was burnt in a fire. To commemorate him the emperor forbade people to burn fires for one day. In this instance, alongside the food the eater ingests the social and cultural values of "being Chinese".

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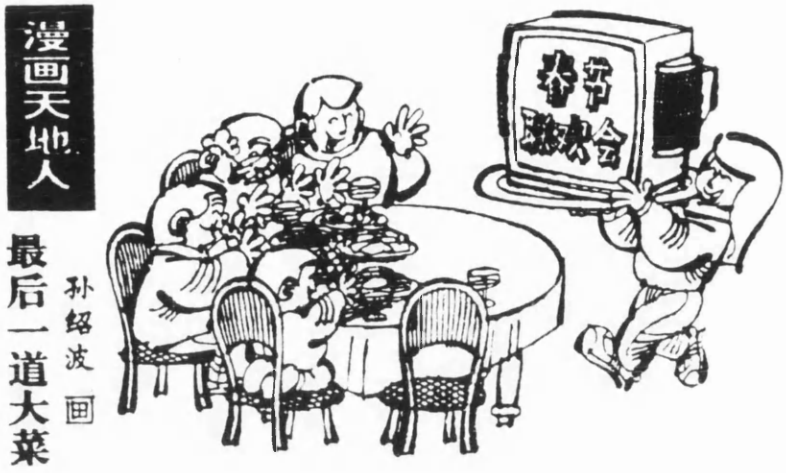
[45]The solar calendar is generally used in China. But for the six day duration of Spring Festival and other specific festive days people revert to the traditional lunar calendar.

[46]Particular flowers and clothing are associated with festivals. For example, children should have a tiger's head embroidered on their shoes (**hutouxie**) for the Dragon Boat Festival (**duanwujie**), at Spring Festival they should have a new set of clothes. Flowers are involved in most festivals, for example, narcissus (**shuixian**) and wintersweet (**lamei**) are bought for Spring Festival and mugwort (**ai**) is associated with the Dragon Boat Festival.



Cartoon 11 Caption "The Last Big Dish"
The television screen shows that it is the start of the New Year's Eve Variety programme.
(XMWB 22 January 1993)

In life cycle rituals commensality expresses and maintains relationships. Particular foods eaten have symbolic importance, for instance, peaches given to the elderly and noodles eaten on birthdays symbolize long life. Wedding foods include **zaozi** (dates) - expressing the hope that the couple will **zao sheng rizi** (give birth to a son soon) and **lianxin** (lotus seeds) the wish that the couple will be **xin lian xin** - hearts joined together.

When visiting relatives it is considered bad manners to arrive empty handed (**kongshou**) and gifts, often of food, facilitate, follow and create lines of communication. In the dialect to give somebody a present is *song ninqing* (**song renqing**), **renqing** has the meaning of both human feelings and a gift. For instance, if preparing to attend a wedding, one may ask "*song jidi ninqing*?/**song duoshao renqing**?" - how much human feeling should be given? In a typical instance, a young married couple took two expensive boxes of moon cakes (costing 84¥) when visiting the wife's parental home. This represented a sizeable portion from the couple's combined monthly income of under 500¥. A traditional saying comments: human feeling is more important than debt (**renqing da yu zhai**).

Banqueting and gift giving plays an important role not only in maintaining ties of affect but also in the creation and maintenance of more directly instrumental relationships in the "art of **guanxi**" (Yang 1994: 127-39). In Shanghai foods such as turtle, shark's fin soup and crab were considered especially prestigious for banquets. Similarly, particular foods acted as "social lubricants" (Anderson 1988: 200) in gift-giving such as crabs and *Maotai* alcohol. A piece of doggerel acknowledged this widespread practice: *ma ge va tci,*

tci ge va ma/**maide bu chi, chide bu mai** - the people who buy them don't eat them, the people who eat them don't buy them.

Acceptance of gifts or a meal may constitute "repayment" for a debt of gratitude or create a duty of reciprocation at some point in the future. Eating the food of relatives also involves reciprocity. A recently married woman, for instance, told me that she often ate at her nearby mother-in-law's home. However, she had begun to cut down these visits, feeling that it increased the pressure on her to produce a grandchild as soon as possible. At times, refusing a gift can resemble a fierce struggle, with pushing and shoving by gift giver and refuser. One household head told me that he particularly disliked the inflation of this practice during the reform era. He did his best to refuse all gifts to avoid embroilment in the round of reciprocity it creates. In explaining this attitude he remarked that his household was "**kaifang**". This is the expression for the "Open Door" policy (see chapter 1). In this instance it conveyed a sense of "modernity", an oppositional stance to social mores.

Various phrases incorporating the verb **chi** were used to describe types of behaviour, states of mind and personality. A philanderer, for instance, was said to **chi doufu** ("eat bean curd"). Whiteness, purity and "softness" were ideal attributes commonly associated with both women and bean curd. In Shanghai dialect a man who lived off a woman was said to **chi ruanfan** - eat soft rice. The verb **chi** was also often used in the dialect in place of the **putonghua** '**da**' (to hit or beat) as in the expression *tci sang hu*/**chi shenghuo** ("to eat life") - to get a beating. To have suffered was to have "eaten bitterness" (**chiku**). Jealousy was described as "eating vinegar" (**chicu**) and when things did not meet with one's expectations this was evocatively described as "eating a stuffed rice dumpling with no filling" (**chi kongxin tangyuan**).

Many foods in Shanghai were still seasonal. For instance, the arrival of convoys of trucks bringing in water melons was congruent with the arrival of Summer. As I noted in chapter two, the seasonality of foods and the cultural stress upon buying fresh unprepared foods daily contributed to city dwellers' sense of being linked to the countryside. Indeed, this link may well have been reinforced during the reform era. Before the re-introduction of free markets, foods were bought from state stores. Now, many fresh foods were bought directly from the peasant producers in free markets.

There were, however, new trends which pulled in a different direction. During the reform era new types of foods have become available. An early arrival was *Nescafé*, jars of which graced many a display cabinet and were often given as gifts. Coffee drinking is a good instance of the way that consumption can express and establish differences between

social groups (Bocock 1993: 64). The consumption of coffee was considered prestigious and "modern" and young people especially drank coffee.[47] A different import to Shanghai in 1992-4 was the spread of the Cantonese habit of eating **zaocha** (breakfast tea and snacks), culinary recognition of this region's growing economic importance. Shanghai's restaurant scene was also being re-internationalized with Korean and Japanese restaurants and fast food chains such as *Kentucky Fried Chicken*. Nanjing Road now boasted a fine example of cultural miscegenation, a Japanese Hamburger Bar! The rapid rise in the number of non-local, processed and packaged foods will increase alienation from the producers of foods and the seasons.

A young employee at a television station described a generation gap in levels and types of consumption. She felt that her generation's way of eating was a result of **kaifang** and that it was more "modern" (**xianjin**). As an example, she told me that when her contemporaries dine at a restaurant they only order what they can eat. This was more "modern" than her parent's generation who would deliberately order more than could be consumed. Another result of **gaige kaifang** she remarked upon was the recent proliferation of fast food restaurants (**kuaican**). These were a consequence of the faster "rhythm"" (**jiezou**) of society. She noted that her parents had more time to shop and prepare meals. By contrast, she worked longer hours, under greater pressure and rarely ate at home. Her parents regarded her regular meals out as a waste of money. She saw this different view as symptomatic of a general generational difference in values and priorities. Her parents stressed the importance of saving for "the future" (**weilai**), in particular, for her marriage.

Metaphors of eating could be used to express the new inequalities which were emerging. For instance, in the view of a factory worker big share dealers "eat big meat" (**chi da rou**) whilst small scale share buyers, such as herself, "eat small meat" (**chi xiao rou**). In another instance, a neighbourhood cultural centre worker expressed the view that "top officials eat big 'rice' (**daguan chi da fan**), middle ranking officials eat medium sized 'rice' and minor officials eat small 'rice'." Notions of expropriation and corruption could also be expressed through gastronomical metaphors. The "appetite" (**weikou**) of officials who accepted bribes was said to depend upon how "greedy" (**tanxin**) they were - the higher the official the greater his "appetite".

It was considered axiomatic that top officials ate foods unavailable to the common

[47]On one occasion I visited a household where I was given coffee to drink. Each time my glass was half empty more coffee and water were added. I realized that my hosts were treating coffee in the same way as green tea.

people. Informants would assure me that, for example, Deng Xiaoping ate croissants flown in specially from France and that top Shanghai officials drank tea which cost 10,000¥ per **jin**. More visible differences in consumption were also taken as evidence of inequalities. For instance, one informant commented on Zhapu Road restaurants that "ordinary people cannot afford to eat there, you can tell the kind of people who eat there from the fact they arrive by car."

I noted earlier the importance of the hairy crabs (*du za ha*/**dazhaxie**) eaten each Autumn. Since this prized food had increased dramatically in price in recent years, this could make comparisons with the past very unfavourable. For instance, one informant remarked that in the Cultural Revolution crabs had cost just 2¥ per **jin**, they now cost 80-100¥ per **jin**. He remarked that "my family used to eat them five or six times a year, now not at all." The ability to consume or exclusion from consumption of these crabs could mark out different status groups. When I asked one informant who could afford to eat crabs, he suggested that they were mostly "the class with special power (**tequan jieji**) and **getihu**...who should be classed as 'citizen strata' (**shimin jieceng**), but who economically are very different from ordinary city folk." A front page article in **Xinmin Wanbao** which caught many people's attention described a couple who paid over 1,000¥ for two large crabs.[48] They refused to tell the journalist their names or occupation but would only comment that "we are also ordinary salaried stratum." The journalist and those I spoke with clearly did not believe this. Instances of such conspicuous consumption often provoked the anger of those who "relied on their salaries to eat" (**kao gongzi chifan de**).

From the comments above one can distinguish the discursive creation of the "**laobaixing**" as a discrete category of persons. The **laobaixing**, as I note in the introduction to this thesis were a shifting category. However, there were distinct contours. The **laobaixing** were routinely described as "everybody except high officials". The wealthy and intellectuals were ambiguous members of this category - both sought to be incorporated as **laobaixing** but others may deny their inclusion. If asked whether they were **laobaixing**, intellectuals affirmed this. However, in their conversations, my impression was that they defined "**laobaixing**" as a category separate, separated by education, from themselves. They depicted **laobaixing**, as it were, as those who had not "consumed" sufficient **wenhua** (culture/education). Although Chinese people did not speak of education as something consumed, my interpretation does not seem too far fetched. It

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[48]"**Xunmi Xie Wang**" (Searching For The King of the Crabs) XMWB 17 January 1993: 1.

is notable that in Chinese knowledge is described as being in the "stomach" (**duzi**). The category **laobaixing** generally concorded with those who "relied on their salaries to eat." The **laobaixing** were portrayed as morally good, honest and hard-working. By definition they were not conspicuous consumers or consumers of expensive goods and services.

Workers who had been laid-off (**xiagang**) and lacked an alternative source of income formed a largely hidden underclass unable to participate in popular consumption. A factory worker in her late forties who had been laid-off told me that half the nine hundred workers at her **danwei** were in the same situation. She believed that the factory originally had considerable potential and blamed its decline on the factory manager appointed in the late 1980s. She described the behaviour of this "hooligan manager" (**liumang changzhang**) in the following manner:

> He eats from day until night. Every lunchtime he eats at restaurants - often in Zhapu Road - until 2pm. He has a car bought by the **danwei**. (A television game show is on as we speak, she points to it). Recently 20,000-40,000¥ was spent on the factory taking part in a television game show! Many places have our advertisements and our manager often appears on the television. He wants to become famous (**chuming**) but there is no production. The boss just wants to use connections (**la guanxi**), eat, drink and have a good time (**chihe wanle**).

The diverse examples provided above demonstrate the pervasive role that food and "food talk" played in the lives of Shanghainese citizens. In the early days of my research, when I could understand little of the Shanghai dialect, an informant attempted to console me. He told me that I was not missing much, for people were either talking about food or money. From these more quotidian and ritual uses of food I now turn to ways in which metaphors and analogies of food and eating were used to portray the relationship between Shanghai and its people and the state.

5.4.2 The State As Conspicuous Consumer/Consuming The State

In chapter two I noted the conviction of many Shanghainese that the Chinese state was a voracious consumer of Shanghai's wealth. This was clear in the comment of a women in her early forties who said that in the thirty years after 1949 Shanghai had not changed. It had just "lived off its past capital" - **chi laoban** ("eaten its old capital") whilst the whole country had "lived off Shanghai" - **quan guo chi Shanghai** ("the whole country ate Shanghai"). In a similar vein, a young man adapted a current slang term for a rich man (**dahu**) in describing Shanghai's relationship to the state, calling the city the "biggest tax paying **dahu** of all." This perception of many Shanghainese was the inverse of the Communist Party's rhetoric (before 1949 at least) that Shanghai was a parasitic "consumer

city" (**xiaofei chengshi**). However, this was only one aspect of a relationship of symbiotic commensality for many were described as being fed by the state. This applied in particular to those in larger state enterprises who had an "iron rice bowl" (**tie fanwan**) who "ate the food of the state" (**chi guojia de**).

An elderly man graphically summed up the situation in China for me in the following way: "China only has one Party, if you don't eat this Party's food, you will starve" (**Zhongguo zhi you yi ge dang, ni bu chi tade fan, ni jiu esi le**).[49] It is interesting to compare this comment to those of a rich share dealer in his mid-thirties who complained that at his work unit people simply sat around and drank tea all day. He said that he rarely went to the **danwei**, and added, "I don't drink the Communist Party's tea, I can drink my own tea at home." I suggest that these two comments are highly indicative of the changes in Shanghai society. The elderly man describes especially the Maoist era when the "iron rice bowl" (**tie fanwan**) dominated. The share dealer depicts the contemporary situation in which the "unbreakable" rice bowl" had been either broken (**dapo**) or, at least, begun to leak (**lou**). That the younger man did not have to drink the Communist Party's tea may serve as a metaphor for and is indicative of the newly emergent possibilities for alternative lifestyles and means of livelihood.

The share dealer had chosen his new career, for many others there was little choice. A worker in a state **danwei** told me that from 1994 she and her colleagues would no longer "eat food from the big national pot" (**chi daguo fan**), a term which often served as a synonym for socialism. Instead each department of the **danwei** would have to earn its own salary and bonus. This was occurring in many **danwei** and created particular problems in those which did not produce saleable items. Changing jobs was increasingly common. A slang expression for this was **huan yi wan fan chi chi** - change to a different rice bowl to eat. Another expression which had recently become popular to describe changing jobs was **tiaocao** - to jump to another trough. As one informant commented, "previously one could not **tiaocao**, but only be a 'revolutionary screw' (**geming luosiding**)." An expression which demonstrated a new possibility was **chi waihui de ren** - "people who eat outside money" - a term used of Shanghainese who lived off money sent them by relatives abroad.

The term **chi daguo fan** could have a rather derogatory meaning in Shanghai - it was, as Rofel found in Hangzhou, a synonym for a "lazy work ethic" (1989: 238). However, a more distinctly parasitic type of relationship had flourished in the reform era.

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[49]On another occasion he substituted the term **laoban** - boss - for "Party". The meaning is the same.

The city's countless expensive new and refurbished restaurants were often filled with diners. This proliferation was ascribed by some informants to the commercialization of the economy and the association between commercial transactions and banqueting. More negatively, many Shanghainese described it as "eating public funds" (**chi gongkuan**), also referred to as **chi laogong** (eating the Communist Party). A former accountant told me that this was very corrupt (**fubai**) and that it made people very angry (**qi ren**).[50] He continued that this "**chi laogong** is actually eating the blood of the **laobaixing**. This was why in the 1989 demonstrations the main protest was against official corruption (**guandao**), the **laobaixing** supported this." During these protests several dozen Shanghai students emulated those in Beijing and embarked upon a hunger strike outside the city government headquarters. The television pictures and descriptions of the hunger strikers - the "nation-family's children" - provoked a very strong emotional response among many people. The moral power of this refusal to consume - conspicuous non-consumption - contrasted sharply with the (perceived) avaricious consumption by high officials.[51]

A woman who had been employed in a karaoke bar and a Zhapu Road restaurant confirmed the impression of many Shanghainese that customers were often "eating public funds". She remarked that many customers asked to have a receipt, for which they would be reimbursed later by their **danwei**. On one instance I was shown around a newly opened restaurant by the manager. I subsequently described this visit to some Chinese friends. I told them that several hundred thousand *yuan* had been spent on furnishings including mahogany tables and chairs and, for example, flying in Taiwanese chefs and ingredients for its opening night. The immediate reaction of my friends was that it must be owned by the state. One of them explained that "if money is being spent in this way it must be a state restaurant because the state's money can never be used up (**yongbuwan**). If it runs out they just dig out (**wachulai**) more from the pockets of the **laobaixing**."

A local slang expression which was indicative of individuals' changed relationship to society and changing social values was *hun vɛ tci*/**hun fan chi** (to get a meal just by muddling through) which could be translated as "putting the minimum effort required into one's job." A former teacher in his sixties remarked that *hun vɛ tci* could be contrasted to the term **gongxian** (contribute). He recalled that:

In the early 1950s people worked very hard, this was to 'serve the people' (**wei**

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[50]Business trips by officials were also often regarded as extensive opportunities to consume public funds.

[51]The Party tried to discredit the Beijing hunger strike by showing film of a prominent student leader and hunger striker, We'er Kaixi, apparently enjoying a luxurious meal at this time.

renmin fuwu) it was **gongxian**.[52] Then people would have despised somebody who said that he was *hun vɛ tci* and regard them as petty bourgeois (**xiao shimin**). It was like this until about 1958. Now it is the other way round, even doctors may say they are *hun vɛ tci*. People would consider somebody who said he was 'serving the people' as an idiot (**shi san dian**).

5.5 Emergent Contours of Lifestyle Consumption

Georg Simmel (1990: 342-4) considered that the rise of the money economy allows individuals to engage in new forms of association. Presciently, he also noted that dislocation from fixed structures and the uprooting of values which this new freedom involves would lead people to search for significance in arts, new styles and so forth. Contemporary analysts have built upon Simmel's insights. It has been noted that "[p]eople in contemporary society come together in 'taste cultures', 'life-style groupings', or 'market segments', which represent distinctive consumption patterns" (Leiss *et al* 1986: 3). Similarly, Bocock writes on the way that consumption can express and establish differences between social groups (1993: 64).

By the term "lifestyle consumers" I indicate people's use of products to assert particular identities. These identities overlap and may cross-cut those more territorially based identifications outlined in chapter two. In Shanghai during 1992-4 there was ample evidence of the way "the person in the big city consumes in order to articulate a sense of identity, of who they wish to be taken to be" (Ibid: 17). An informant provided me with a striking instance of the way the "consumer is engaged in a continual task of grading goods and occasions and matching them appropriately" (Douglas 1992: 153). He told me of a **danwei** colleague who regularly carried three brands of cigarettes - imported, good quality Chinese cigarettes and poor quality local cigarettes. The type of cigarette offered depends upon the man's assessment of the interactee's social status and/or potential instrumental value to himself. A distinct case of wanting to be taken as what one *presents* to others, what may be termed a literal presentation of self (cf. Goffman 1959).

5.5.1 Lifestyle Consumers

In Shanghai it was possible to discern at least two sections of society which conformed closely to "status groups". These are defined by Bocock as having "a distinctive pattern of living, of eating, drinking, dressing, entertaining, in short of

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[52]Nien Cheng writes that, "'To Serve the People' was perhaps the most publicized slogan of the Chinese Communist Party" (1986: 498).

consuming" (1993: 6). The first of these are **getihu**. Tom Gold writes of **getihu** that "the young ones in particular, have developed a distinctive life style...characterised above all by conspicuous consumption" with the emergence of many coffee shops, restaurants, bars, and hair salons to cater to their tastes (1990: 176). In popular discourse **getihu** were considered the exemplars of conspicuous consumption, spending lavishly on karaoke, clothing, women and food.[53] They were said to do this to *gue pa dü*/**guai paitou** - display their wealth/show of their style or to *tse fong dü*/**chu fengtou** - seek to be in the limelight. Such perceptions bear a close parallel to the way **getihu** were often described as **baofahu** - upstarts, people who had got rich quick. Like Ann Anagnost I found that **baofahu** often had connotations that this wealth derived from "dark economic forces" such as speculation or fraud (1989: 219). The root of the term **bao** in **baofahu** is "sudden and violent" (also "savage, cruel; hot-tempered; stand out" CED 1988: 24) - it may be used to describe the violence of a thunderstorm. Their pattern of consumption was popularly perceived of in just this way, with their money portrayed as spent wildly, freely, aggressively, with no concern for taste or finesse.

A second "status group" is outlined in an article in **Xinmin Wanbao** which stated that "yuppies (**yapishi**) had now emerged in Shanghai."[54] The term **yapishi** was a newly coined term, a transliteration from English. This article described them as being "foreign style" (**yangqi**) and mostly graduates from Shanghai's top universities who worked for foreign companies. Distinctive aspects of these young professionals included the way they were "immaculately dressed", speak foreign languages fluently, go to big hotels and travel by taxi.

A young deputy restaurant manageress who closely fitted this description told me that she wished to become a successful person (**chenggongzhe**). Her notion of success included distinctly "Chinese characteristics". For instance, her definition of success included, not unexpectedly, the ability to enjoy high class consumption (**gaoji xiaofei**) items. However, she added that she already frequently participated in many of these activities, such as eating in expensive restaurants and going to karaoke bars. A vital ingredient of her definition of success was the ability to invite other people to engage in these activities and to be able to pay the bill. Additionally, success, in her view, would

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[53]Susan Young (1991: 128-32) mentions the widespread perception of conspicuous consumption by **getihu** and hints that there is some truth behind this. She writes that many **getihu** (in the late 1980s) "fully expect the policy of encouraging private business to change, and do business with this in mind" (131).

[54]"**Shanghaitan Chuxian 'Yapishi'**" ('Yuppies' Appear In Shanghai) XMWB 26 October 1992: 2.

include the ability to financially support her parents.

5.5.2 Famous Brand Name Clothing: The Uncooked Consumer?

Whilst in prison during the Cultural Revolution, Nien Cheng was faced by one interrogator who had hair greased down, clothing of good quality and a gold watch, "the habitual attire of the capitalist class" (1986: 257-8). She was surprised to see somebody dressed in this way and writes that only later did she find out that this attire marked him out as "a typical son of a senior army commander." This instance clearly indicates how styles of consumption may divide and the way "[c]lothing is a vocabulary, complete with evocative subtext" (Finkelstein 1991: 108). In this case differential styles of dressing are expressive of power relationships. In contemporary China, power grows less obviously from the barrel of a gun than from the wallet.[55] Clothing styles are now more diverse and their "meanings" more ambiguous - they may indicate relations of power (dressed in a new guise) but may also be indicative or expressive of aspirations, commodification and commercialism as well as involving indigenous notions of face.

Fashion in contemporary Shanghai provides many examples of the way "consumption involves the incorporation of the consumed item into the personal and social identity of the consumer" (Gell 1986: 112). In this section I interrogate the desire to acquire famous brand name (**mingpai**) clothing to see what it communicates about Shanghai in the 1990s.[56] I begin with an indigenous explanation for this phenomena taken from an article in Shanghai's **Wenhui Bao**.[57] This article suggested that in cities such as Shanghai people are "compelled" to join the trend to buy **mingpai**. Two main reasons are suggested to explain this. Firstly, the "desire to consume" had been suppressed until the reform era and this type of high consumption is a form of "compensation" for this "psychological suppression" Secondly, it suggests that Chinese consumers are influenced by an "abnormal emotionalism" (**qingxuhua**). It gives as an example, men who even refrain from eating meat to save money to buy foreign cigarettes. They may not even

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[55]This is partly a question of visibility, as the military is deeply embroiled in commercial affairs.

[56]In a more extended investigation of fashion, gender would play a particularly important part. An examination of mid-1980s female fashions is presented in Honig & Hershatter (1988: 42-51). Marilyn Young (1989: 263), for instance, writes of the way that "[t]he sexually undifferentiated style of dress and manner urged on women during the Cultural Revolution has been overwhelmingly rejected." Instead many magazines and other media "educate" women in how to be "feminine", including advice on posture, make-up, fashion and bodily shape.

[57]"**Mingpai Xiaofeichao Nengfou Chijiu**?" (Can The Flood Of Famous Brand Name Consumption Endure?) WHB 13 May 1993: 7.

enjoy smoking these cigarettes but just holding them gives them "a sense of self confidence." The writer suggests that buying **mingpai** is comparable to the way people in poor rural areas are extremely frugal except for key ritual events when they may spend several years savings at once. In both these cases, these items become necessities, rather than luxuries, in the serous game of maintaining status at an appropriate level.

The article states that people buy **mingpai** not for their use value but rather for their symbolic meaning (**xiangzheng yiyi**). It adds:

> Every commercial product has the symbolic function of displaying the owner's social and economic status, personality, accomplishment, character/quality, and so forth. Commercial products possess this symbolic function because in society they are always associated with a particular type of person, for example, high class cars are invariably associated with high ranking cadres, wealthy people and film stars, pianos are associated with dignified (**timian**) families, '**dageda**' (mobile phones) with managers, bosses, and high level company employees and so on. Commercial products have become an important sign (**biaozhi**) of displaying a person's social status.

The article suggests that often people without sufficient money seek to buy these products and that this will change only when consumers become more mature (**chengshu** - ripe). The article sees the craze for high levels of consumption as led by the propaganda of Western high consumption and the "gushing in" of foreign famous brand products.

The **mingpai** clothing and accessories which people bought or aspired to buy were predominantly American and European products such as *Nike* and *Roebuck* training shoes and, for the most wealthy, Swiss watches and *Pierre Cardin* suits. During the early 1990s it became much easier to buy such products in Shanghai including from shops devoted to selling single name brands of imported clothes. These products were far more expensive than locally made goods, for instance, *Nike* trainers at around 600¥ were some ten times the cost of locally made sports shoes. This accords closely with both the indigenous explanation in this article (although the writer could well have referred to translated Western sources and/or been abroad) and Alan Tomlinson's definition of consumerism as "the difference between buying an object mainly for its function, and acquiring an item for its style" (1990a: 9).

I noted earlier the common conflation of notions of "the West" (**xifang**) and "modernity" (**xiandaihua**), the purchase of Western and Japanese goods as symbols of success, and the stress upon wealth as a key component in the judgement of a person's worth. Clothing fits into this framework and wearing expensive foreign clothing could instil a sense of national or local pride. This "purchasing pride" was evident in the comments of a businesswomen who had bought such clothing and told me that it gave her

a "sense of pride that as a Chinese and a Shanghainese I can afford to buy such items." I also felt that her comments accorded closely with Simmel's insight that "the very act of buying is experienced as such a satisfaction, because the objects are absolutely obedient to money...money provides a unique extension of personality" (1990: 326).

The desire and pressure to buy these products was most apparent among the young, especially university students and those engaged in commerce. In many ways these were the two sections of society most affected by the increasingly marketized economy and for whom style had become "a powerful medium of encounter" (Ewen 1990: 46). The popular use in the 1990s of the term **baozhuang** ("packaging") is indicative of this "aestheticization of social relations" (Ibid: 49). The Chinese term **baozhuang** - pack or package - had recently acquired, imported from English, the more abstract meaning of the term "packaging" as used in advertising. Mike Featherstone stresses "the importance of appearance and the 'look'" in consumer culture (1991: 170). He suggests that with consumer culture a "new conception of self has emerged" (1991: 187). He calls this a "performing self" which "places greater emphasis upon appearance, display and the management of impressions" (Ibid). Featherstone writes that in consumerist society "individuals are required to be 'on stage' all the time" (Ibid: 190, cf. Goffman 1959).

Although this is a useful approach I consider that it has a rather ethnocentric bias. From my interviews and conversations with Shanghainese it appears that the need for individuals to be "on stage" was particularly strong in China's most virulently anti-consumerist phase, during the Cultural Revolution. Many informants likened the Cultural Revolution period to a dramatic stage (**wutai**) in which individuals had to act out certain roles (**juese**). Indigenous notions of "face" also indicated a conception of public behaviour as involving role-playing, for instance, the dialect term for "lose face" (*tɛ dɛ*/**ta tai**) means literally a "collapsing stage". The key change in contemporary China is the much greater range, diversity and origin of acceptable "looks". I would argue that in the reform era presentation of self and the management of impressions is concerned less with verbal or written expression - such as self-criticisms - than with visible images. Whereas people in the Cultural Revolution appear to have dressed largely *not* to be noticed, *not* to attract the surveillant gaze, they may now dress to attract an appreciative gaze. Moreover, it is no longer politically inspired notions of style that dominate but images purveyed by advertisers and the mass media which increasingly contribute to and are imbricated with the construction of socially acceptable "looks" and perceptions of the body.

On *Shanghai Television Station* and Shanghai's *Oriental Television Station* there

were many advertisements which promoted "looks" and "lifestyles". Amongst the myriad of advertisements for products which promised to improve viewers' hair, teeth, skin and health were those for *Cussons* soap - "for the future world" (**weilai de shijie**), *Gillette* razor blades - to make the user "**gengjia xiaosa**" (even more carefree/fashionable), and *Lux Shower Cream* to "make the (female) you that loves beauty even more attractive". Food adverts included *Tuc* biscuits promise of the "taste of France" (**Faguo fengwei**), *Sunkist* canned drinks film of beaches in America and backing music in English "California dreaming...", and *Kentucky Fried Chicken*'s call to **chihe wanle** (eat, drink and be merry). "Traditional" gender stereotypes dominated - men were doctors, businessmen, "experts"; women were pretty, mothers, dancers, air-hostesses. Locations were often of modern kitchens, shopping malls, "exotic" places.

The new stress upon "packaging" and the associated desire for **mingpai** intersects with "traditional" notions of face (**mianzi**). When I asked people of differing ages and occupations why people liked to buy **mingpai** I received very similar answers. Typically, I was told that people wear **mingpai** as a means to display (**biaoshi**) or increase (**tigao**) their social status - **shenfen** or **shenjia** (literally "the value of their body"). Informants linked this to the way Shanghainese "want face" (**ai mianzi**) and/or, more critically to their vanity (**xurongxin**). Only those with "thick-skinned faces" (**lianpi hou**) did not want face. A library worker added that "Shanghainese judge people by their clothing (**tongguo yifu kan ren**). They pay great attention to this packaging (**baozhuang**)." Now that economic success was often perceived to be the main determinant of a person's worth it was increasingly important for the packaging of the individual - clothing, make-up, and other adornments - to conform to media derived images of success.

The examples just given indicate how "consumer goods are part of the way in which people construct a sense of who they are" (Bocock 1993: 52). Bocock describes this as "a ceaseless striving for the *distinctive*" (18). In the context of Shanghai this approach can be examined from differing perspectives. Within the commercializing and marketizing environment and emergent popular consumerism of contemporary Shanghai one might talk about a rise of individualism. As I noted in chapter four there is an emergent discourse on individualism, there are also undoubtedly many new ways to present one's face/facade to the world. From a different perspective, one may consider this as an "invention" (cf. Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) of individualism, which may be construed as a commodification of the individual. The particular products that people desire to consume, and the lifestyles they hope to achieve, are often closely related to the category systems

of consumers constructed by advertisers. Consumers may, for instance, seek to emulate patterns of consumption depicted in "lifestyle format" advertising (Leiss *et al* 1986: 210-15). However, this is also a reflexive, interactive process. Producers, for instance, engage in extensive market research, they are responding to, as well as in/forming, "consumer demands".

Young people were especially attracted to buy **mingpai**. This contributed to the view of many parents who felt that with **gaige kaifang** some positive values have been lost such as the ability of young people to keep expenditure within the limits of income (**liang ru weichu**) and the value of thrift (**jieyue**). Older informants expressed incomprehension at the way youngsters may spend 300¥ on tickets for the concerts of Taiwanese and Hong Kong pop singers and their desire to buy **mingpai** clothing and accessories. Older people wanted durable (**jieshi**) clothes. Their modes of dressing were often distinctive. For instance, an elderly man I interviewed at his home in the Summer wore an old, threadbare vest, with holes and patches and ancient, striped pyjama bottoms. Chinese viewers of Western soaps would remark on the way that Western middle-aged woman "dress-up" and wear make-up. They would contrast this to the lack of such adornments among Chinese women of this age group. However, this was beginning to change.

Many informants volunteered examples of young people who spent all their income on clothing, even to the extent of stinting on food. This is clearly not only a post-reform phenomenon since a pre-1949 expression - **yang zhuang biesan, ziji shaofan** ("Western-suited trash, cooks his own food") - describes behaviour of a similar kind. I learnt this expression from a man in his late sixties who was explaining to me notions of face in Shanghai. He used this expression of the way people may "show off" (*gue pa dü*/**guai paitou**) or "want face" (**yao mianzi**). His explanation of this phrase was that it describes a man who wears a Western style suit but has no money, that is, when he returns home, he must cook for himself since he does not even have (i.e. cannot afford) a wife. In part then, the desire for **mingpai**, provides evidence of a developing youth culture but it can also be related to a re-emergent importance of what may now be described as "packaging".

One situation where "packaging" had become important was in searching for employment, where students now had to present a "marketable self" (Featherstone 1991: 171). The employment of students was no longer a "blind marriage" where neither party saw the other. Students who wanted a good job now had to use connections and/or appeal - often in competition with other candidates - to employers who could choose to accept or

reject them. In addition, the lure of the West was especially strong for university students and they adopted the status symbols of the West. At the university I stayed in, male students wore suits and ties on a regular basis - ironically modes of dress that many Western students actively avoid. Shanghai youth dress up to be **xiaosa** - a phrase originally meaning "natural and unrestrained" but, after having been made popular through a Taiwanese pop song it has acquired the meaning "stylish" or "trendy" (note its use in the *Gillette* advert mentioned above). Through being **xiaosa**, young people adopted the packaging of success and hoped that this would help them obtain the other accoutrements of success - a good job, wealth, and a suitable spouse.

It is important to note that not all types of wealthy people were considered to want to buy **mingpai** clothing. A young businessman commented that whilst "**getihu** are openly (**ming**) rich, they have style (**paitou**), others may be even richer but were secret (**an** - also "dark, dim; unclear, hazy" CED 1988: 6)), for example, officials who trade in real estate." A share exchange manager commented that those who spent the most freely were often the young, especially university students who relied on their parents. Others with a high expenditure level, he noted, were businessmen, who buy expensive clothes to display their social status (**shenjia** - literally "the value of their body", but also "the selling price of a slave") and to facilitate their commercial activities. My informants felt that, in the absence of personal ties, businessmen were judged by the cost of the clothing they wore. In business, as in job hunting and mate selection, a good "presentation" was extremely important (Ewen 1990: 45). As one informant noted, "they must have this face (**mianzi**) in order to do business." The exchange manager felt that, by comparison, those who made a lot of money from share dealing "live very simply (**pusu**), for example, they eat bread, just drink hot water and wear five *yuan* shoes." My own observations suggested that this distinction was overdrawn but not entirely unwarranted. The manager suggested that rich share dealers may be afraid to reveal their wealth as people may harm them or want to borrow money from them. A young wealthy share dealer agreed with the manager's distinction between share dealers and businessmen. However, he felt that share buyers were less likely to buy **mingpai** because they are in a "process of accumulation" which is insecure and that, in any event, "share dealers only interact with a computer." There were also people who ostentatiously displayed their ability to enjoy prestigious consumption patterns but who may be ridiculed for their trouble, an instance of the way that "[g]oods

can be used as fences or bridges" (Douglas & Isherwood 1978: 12).[58]

5.5.3 Shanghai Christmas - A New Ritual Of Consumerism

In recent years anthropologists (e.g. Miller 1994, Parkin 1993, Stirrat 1989) have questioned the assumption that global cultural interconnectedness leads to cultural homogenization. David Parkin, for instance, sees global convergence only at the most superficial of levels. Rather than homogeneity he sees "an *infinitely produced* diversity" (97). He argues that "the way in which goods are recontextualized is of utmost significance" (90). Ethnographic examples highlight the rich vein such study offers. In Sri Lanka, for example, Stirrat (1989) shows how consumer goods can mean quite different things in different contexts. He describes fishing households which build car ports and buy televisions but have no cars, roads or electricity. Stirrat sees this consumption as "part of a symbolic struggle with the Sinhalese middle class" (108). Similarly, Daniel Miller observes that "Trinidad is not becoming more like anywhere else, except in the most superficial sense that it is using products of the global economy" (1994: 319).

I would argue that Christmas, like other forms of popular culture, "offers a rich iconography, a set of symbols, objects and artefacts" (Hebdige 1988: 74) which people can reassemble to suit their own ends. Miller cites the Trinidadian Christmas as an example of the way "consumption...takes the imported goods and gives them meaning in relation to local debates and symbolic struggles" (1994: 319). He suggests that "Christmas...is the single most important institution in creating a specific sense of the land of Trinidad" (319). Examples from around the world (see Miller 1993) demonstrate that "Christmas" has diverse meanings. A brief examination of the "Shanghai Christmas", a new ritual of consumption, contributes both to this trans-national ethnography and to an understanding of processes in contemporary Shanghai.

I noted earlier the ennui that many young Shanghainese felt for Spring Festival. This contrasted with their enthusiasm for the imported festival of Christmas.[59] Amongst students in particular cards were sent, presents given and parties held. In many respects this "invocation of an exotic elsewhere" (Hebdige 1988: 9) had meanings very different from the places of its origin. In England, for instance, Christmas is generally seen as a

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[58]For instance, there was the common belief, mentioned in chapter two, that those in Shanghai who displayed the brand label of their suits on the cuffs of their jacket sleeves were "country bumpkins" (**xiangxiaren**).

[59]Another example is St. Valentine's Day (**qingrenjie**).

time for family gatherings at home. It is a ritual fully supported by both the state and the established church. In Shanghai, by contrast, the appropriation of this Western festival provided Chinese youth with a space in which alternative (and, perhaps, oppositional) meanings to dominant cultural traditions could be negotiated and expressed.

Young Shanghainese contrasted Christmas to Spring Festival, the latter being a ritual promoted by the state and supported by their parents. I was often struck by how close their descriptions of Spring Festival were to my recollections of an English Christmas. Both were dominated by the family and home, consumption of foods and television watching. For young Shanghainese, Christmas was a time to "play" (*ba xiang*/**baixiang**), go out with friends, and for dancing parties.

The Shanghai Christmas contributed to the sense of a generation gap. It could also be oppositional to the state. In his examination of **gangtai** culture in the PRC, Tom Gold writes that "[c]onsuming it gives one a sense of participating in a sophisticated global activity" (1993a: 915). Christmas may be viewed in a similar way. The state attempted to dampen the enthusiasm for Christmas. For instance, a television programme producer told me that he had been forbidden to make a programme on Christmas festivities around the world. In **danwei**, I was told of instances in which young workers were prevented from organizing parties and taking time off. University students were told not to celebrate Christmas and threatened with punishment if they missed classes. I was curious to know why the university authorities should have adopted this attitude. One student I asked about this gave two interrelated explanations. Firstly, the university was anti-Christmas because it is a Western (**xihua**) festival. Secondly, she was convinced that their harsh attitude was related to June 4, it was a means both of retribution for the students' involvement in the demonstrations and an attempt to restrict the influence of "Westernization" which had (in their view) encouraged students to call for such "bourgeois" ideas as greater democracy.

When Christmas "re-emerged" in the late 1980s it mainly involved university students organizing their own festivities. However, by Christmas 1993 it had spread beyond the confines of universities. Across the city hotels staged expensive events, restaurants were decorated with coloured lights and imitation snow, and street stalls sold bundles of Christmas cards and pots of poinsettia plants described as *seng de ho*/**shengdanhua** - "Christmas flowers". The power of commercialism and consumerism to transform and appropriate cultural forms was very evident. This is a process familiar in Britain, where sub-cultural styles - punk rock for instance - are rapidly disengaged from

their origins and incorporated into mainstream fashion. At least one young person complained to me that Christmas had become too commercialized (**shangyehua**) in Shanghai.

In the commercial Christmas there was also plenty of evidence that this was still far from global homogeneity. A brief description of a small two-storey private restaurant I chanced upon in mid-December demonstrates this. It had just been refurbished and was ready to open but the manager told me that he was waiting until Christmas, a **renao** ("hot and noisy") time, to reopen. The decorations of the upper floor with its two round tables demonstrated a "mix and match" of cultural forms with a statue of the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy (**Guanyin**), offerings of fresh oranges, little plastic models of Father Christmas and fir trees and, dominating the room, a large, brand new Japanese karaoke outfit. I suspect that here, as elsewhere in Shanghai, the "Christmas" decorations would be kept on view throughout the year. Similarly, on New Year's Eve 1993 I attended a party to celebrate the (Western) New Year. The midnight hour was marked by a karaoke rendition of "Jingle Bells", a song associated with Christmas in Britain and America.[60] This incorporation of Christmas into the local ritual and commercial calendar and the bricolage of cultural artefacts is a fine illustration of the way imported cultural forms are adapted and incorporated in unique ways.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has explored various notions surrounding consumption in Shanghai. It has shown that terminology from the literal consumption of food served, through metaphors and analogies, to describe many aspects of life and diverse relationships in Shanghai including that of Shanghai and its citizens to the state. I have stressed the changing and proliferating styles and contours of consumption and their implication in defining selves and others. The changed array of colours are indicative of wider changes. The reform era has been marked by a shift away from primary colours - red, black and blue - including abstract notions of political "redness" to a kaleidoscope of colours. The Communist Party's attempt to monopolize the only available bright colour - red - has failed. Alongside this diversity of colours there was now a much greater range of visual images and a limited emphasis upon verbal expressions of allegiance to the Party. The

[60]"Jingle Bells" appeared on many karaoke song sheets and was a popular song at any time of the year. In the same way, the music to the Scots song associated with New Year, "Auld Lang Syne", was very popular as piped music on trains and elsewhere.

surveillant gaze has been replaced by the "look".

The globalizing of Shanghai provides local people with many alternative images and products from which to fashion identities. Increasingly, these were less territorially-based identities than say, being Shanghainese. The inflow of media images and products from exotic elsewheres spurs aspirational identities, identities which are asserted or recognized by or through the consumption of products. Miller writes that with mass consumption "identity... is intrinsically an act of forgery" (Miller 1994: 322). Certainly I found evidence of this in Shanghai, although in this location it seems that pre-reform identities or presentations of self were also "forged". In Maoist rhetoric it was often said that humans had to be "forged" or "tempered" (**duanlian**) so as to be true revolutionaries.

Consumerism in 1990s Shanghai is producing, facilitating and marking out new divisions in society. These in themselves may involve potentially dangerous tensions. However, more dangerous still is the raising of expectations and aspirations if they cannot be met. The Communist Party presumably hopes that a generally improving economic situation will bring improvements to all (**shui zhang chuan gao** - when the river rises the boat goes up). Deng Xiaoping has held out the promise of a "comfortable living standard" (**xiaokang shuiping**) for all Shanghai citizens.[61] At present this objective appears attainable, incomes generally are higher and the range and quality of consumer products is increasing.

Above all, it was the younger generation brought up in the reform era who expected far more than their parents. The latter generally described good health, a stable home and career as the main priorities. They had experienced great deprivations and disruptions over recent decades and were particularly likely to stress the importance of stability (**anding**). A magazine editor in his mid-fifties epitomized this approach. His aspirations in the public sphere were to "just muddle along (**hun**) for five or six years until retirement." His main hopes were in the private domain - for good health, the successful marriage and careers of his children, to have his family nearby and to have a grandson. Beyond this a larger living space and consumer items such as air-conditioning were considered highly desirable.

An informant told me, a sentiment voiced by many others, that "one of the good things about socialism is that one can eat from the big national pot (**chi daguo fan**) and just muddle along with little effort (*hun nijia*/**hun rizi**)." However, many young people had much higher aspirations that this. Some actively sought success, to be able to enjoy

[61]Deng first used this term on 16 January 1980 (1983: 223).

high class consumption. Their desires were fuelled by media images and advertising which deliberately aimed to create a "cycle of continual dissatisfaction" by playing upon intimate fears and desires (Ewen & Ewen 1982: 73). Many young people faced a choice between "social security" or material wealth (Bruun 1988: 56). Increasingly, this choice was circumscribed by necessity, as the pull of money grew greater and the security of state **danwei** jobs eroded. The need and desire to make money induced some to take risks. In some instances this involved the dangers of "taking an empty hemp sack to buy rice" (**kong madai bei mi**), that is, try to succeed in business even when one has no capital. More seriously still were the proliferating scams such as financial fraud and the counterfeiting of goods. Local consumers were increasingly aware that the famous brands they desired may be fakes, mere facades of the "real" product.

Even for those who had already successfully plunged into the "sea" of business there were risks. During a bear market even a wealthy share dealer may, as one dealer described it, see his large **mantou** (steamed bun, i.e. his fortune) become a **daoqie mantou** (slices of steamed bun). In the event of a general economic downturn the newly emergent distinctions I have outlined may rapidly become fractures and fissures along which frustrations and discontent flow. During the 1980s there was a creation of "new hungers for a better life" (Stross 1990 501). In Spring 1989 these "hungers... expanded to the realm of political change" (Ibid). In the future, the aspirations of the **laobaixing** may once again extend to imported cultural products such as "democracy" and "freedom". It may also be that a new range of targets and scapegoats will serve as the focus for collective discontent amongst those denied access to popular consumerism or who lose their ability to participate in this consumption. Chief amongst these targets could be newly emergent strata of wealthy consumers, especially if they are considered to have achieved their wealth by unscrupulous means.

Chapter 6 Taking Stock - Emerging Social Contours and Boundaries in 1990s Shanghai

The comedy play "OK Stock" performed in Shanghai in March 1993 portrayed in dramatic fashion many of the strands which were present and the changes which were taking place in early 1990s Shanghai.[1] The lead figure was Ah Nai, a middle aged factory worker who has been made redundant but who becomes increasingly involved in the newly resuscitated Shanghai share market. By the end of the play he has become a **dahu**, a rich man. Midway through the play Ah Nai delivers a short soliloquy which encapsulated much that I had heard and read about the lives of most Shanghai people before the 1980s. At this point in the play Ah Nai has just told his wife, Ding Yiying, that he has lost his job. She berates him and tells him that he should go to the factory and demand it back.

Ah Nai: *What would I go there for? To rebel? Since the higher authorities have already made a decision,*[2] *I've just got to accept it.*

Ding Yiying: *Accept, accept, accept! You only know how to accept.*[3] *It's easy to bully you. People just piss on your head! Regulations are dead, people are alive!*

(Ah Nai moves to centre right stage and, illuminated by a single spotlight, sums up his life history).

Ah Nai: *Whether they are dead or alive, I carry them all out. In any case I've always lived according to regulations, I'm used to it... I was told which primary school I should go to, so I just went to that primary school; I was told which middle school to attend, so I just went to that middle school; when I was told where to go and work in the countryside, I went to that place to work in the countryside; when I was ordered to return to the city, I returned to the city; when I was ordered to go to a particular work unit, that was the work unit I went to. It even got to the point where I was told which hospital to go to, which rice store to buy rice in, where to buy special purchases for Spring Festival, and I just fell in line with each and every one of these orders. Now I'm told that I am*

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[1]This play was written by the Shanghai playwright Zhao Nanhua in 1992. It was sponsored by *Shanghai Shenyin Securities* and such listed firms as *Yanzhong*, *Feile* and *Vacuum Electron*. It was performed in Shanghai during early 1993 and later in a drama competition in Beijing. It received both official and wide popular support. In late 1993 a Shanghai dialect version of the play was performed and in early 1994 a film more loosely based upon the play was screened in Shanghai.

[2]The terms I use here, "decision", "told", "regulate", "regulation" and "order" are all translations of the Chinese term **guiding**. In providing a passable English translation some of the force of the original script is inevitably lost.

[3]The Chinese term I have glossed as "accept" is **ren**, which has the meaning of "bear, endure, tolerate, put up with".

*made redundant (**daiye xiagang**),[4] so I just **xiagang**.*

A review article described "OK Stock" as "sticking close to the real life of Shanghai's citizens. All the people and events it describes display the outstanding characteristics of local Shanghai culture."[5] Another newspaper report described the play as "so close to home that many Shanghai audiences feel that they are part of the story."[6] In an interview in Spring 1993 a prominent local writer, a strong supporter of reform, told me that the changes he had witnessed during the previous year were "of an order that a person like myself could never have imagined." High amongst this list of unthinkable changes was the "stock craze" (**gupiao re**) of that period.

In this chapter I argue that the re-introduction of a share market in Shanghai has played an important part in redrawing the social contours of the city. Roy Dilley notes that a "market" should not be seen as "a transhistorical and acultural agent" but, rather, that "[a]ny study of markets...must recognise the participants' understanding and conception of their own social and economic activity" (1992: 14-5). It is just such an exploration that I intend in this chapter. My focus is a "share market with Chinese characteristics",[7] apparent even in the slang term **chao gupiao** - "buying and selling shares" - which literally means to stir-fry stocks.

The reforms introduced in urban China since the late 1970s have broken down some of the rigidities of the preceding era and introduced new dimensions of choice into the lives of many Shanghainese. In this chapter I focus primarily upon the reintroduction of the share market. My reasons for doing so are as follows: 1) The stock market "craze" closely coincided with my own period of research in Shanghai and I was drawn into studying this topic by its sheer topicality. It was a subject that people often discussed and I was in a position to make first hand observations of the changes it brought. 2) The

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[4]The term **daiye xiagang** means "to step down from one's work post and wait for work". Unlike **shiye** - "unemployment" - a **xiagang** worker retains a connection with his work unit, and receives reduced pay and social welfare entitlements. In post 1949 China, especially during the Maoist period, military metaphors have often been used in civilian life. **Xiagang** is a new example, its original meaning being "to come or go off sentry duty". It is illustrative of the degree of flux in Shanghai that on several occasions when I asked informants to explain this term they had not heard it yet, and I became the one to explain its meaning to them!

[5]"**Kan Huaju 'OK, Gupiao'** (Watching the Play 'OK, Stock') SWHYSB 5 March 1993: 2.

[6]"New Drama Plays to the Markets" SS 5 March 1993: 15. Another review described "OK, Stock" as "showing the changes brought by **gaige kaifang** to modern China" ("**'OK, Gupiao' Xianshi Shanghai Huaju Shili**" ('OK, Stock' Shows the Strength of Shanghai Drama) MZWYJMB 7 June 1993: 1.

[7]The Chinese state currently defines its ideology and policies as "socialism with Chinese characteristics".

novelty of the share market means that little has been written on it as a research topic.[8] 3) The share market has affected the lives of many people in Shanghai. 4) The re-introduction and rapid growth of a share market appears dramatically opposed to the policies and rhetoric which had gone before. The introduction of a stock market mechanism into a planned socialist economy was certainly "an unprecedented experiment" (Xie 1990: 25). I was intrigued to know how people would react to this U turn and what effect it would have upon people's lifestyles and perceptions of society. It is not idle speculation to suppose that investigating the repercussions of the Shanghai share market for social relationships in urban China is bound to be insightful.

The changes constituted, and encouraged, by the rapid development of the share market are first located through oral histories, particularly the kinds of comments Shanghainese made about the lack of choice over their lives (during the Maoist era) and the relative egalitarianism. Next I outline several significant economic and policy switches that have affected Shanghai, especially the rapid development of the share market. In the early 1990s a new wealthy stratum emerged, of which successful share dealers comprised a substantial proportion. I outline some of the representations which were made of successful share dealers and draw attention to interstices between the new discourse on shares and pre-existing stereotypes, for instance, of gender and regional difference. I draw attention to some of the problems of the share market and the criticisms people made of it. I then suggest ways in which the share market has played an important part in redefining the relationship of the individual to society. Among the dominant trends emergent appears to be an increasing scope for individual agency and the rise of wealth as both indicative and constituent of social status. The share market has made a significant contribution to expanding what Martin Whyte (1992), in a talk given at SOAS, called the "zone of indifference". In this context, a more appropriate metaphor may be to say that the share market has contributed to "widening the margins".[9]

6.1 Setting the Scene: Shanghai Before the Reform Period

Before 1949, Shanghai was a major banking and financial centre with a stock

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[8]An exception to this is the doctoral thesis by Ellen Hertz, The Trading Crowd: An Ethnography of the Shanghai Stock Market (1994).

[9]This term derives from a remark made by the playwright Zhang Xian in a discussion on his play "The Karaoke Upstairs". The play stars "a Taiwanese ex-hippie-turned-futures-trader" who falls in love with a bar girl and Zhang suggests that its punchline could be "we're all margin traders now" (FEER 14 April 1994: 51).

market similar in size to that of Tokyo and considerably larger than that Hong Kong (see Karmel 1994: 1105-7). Fluctuations in the Shanghai stock exchange over the period 1919-49 exercised a significant influence over both these other markets. An official Chinese publication observed (with a note of irony?) that "[a]ll this disappeared with the founding of the People's Republic in 1949."[10] The new government regarded "stock ownership as a kind of capitalist exploitation of workers."[11]

For over three decades after the Communist Party took power in 1949, Shanghai lay at the heart of China's centrally planned socialist economy. The Party adopted a strict Marxist-Leninist approach which engaged with strands of Chinese traditional morality suspicious of the market (see Stockman 1992). The city's previous role as an entrepôt and an international financial and commercial centre was subordinated to a primary role as a domestic industrial producer. Most informants perceived the scope for individual choice and agency as extremely limited at that time.[12] I was often told by Shanghainese that they felt the highly bureaucratic planned economy had been gradually stifling the city. A factory worker described Shanghai before the early 1990s, and especially before 1978, as **ninggu**, perhaps best translated as "coagulated", whilst a teacher reckoned it had been "held fast in a frame" (**kuangzi shi kuang de hen si**).

Until the late 1970s the state defined just four ideologically acceptable classes of people - workers, intellectuals, soldiers and peasants - with limited movement both within and between these groups. The two classes of capitalist (**zichan jieji**) and petty capitalist (**xiao zichan jieji**) had been eradicated (**xiaomie**), or so it was claimed, by 1956. There were only two types of enterprise, state and collective.

A Shanghainese social science researcher, in a listing remarkable for its congruence with Ah Nai's soliloquy, commented that "people's food, clothing, accommodation, household registration, decision to have children, schooling, job assignments, type of work done and salary were all decided by the state." He added that "there was no other alternative" (**meiyou qita de chulu**) and that "what each person was able to do and obtain was more or less the same." There was little or no opportunity to change one's job or place of residence, at least in terms of upward mobility, and most people knew what their

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[10]"Shanghai: Stock Market Re-established" BR 1989, 132(18): 21.

[11]Cited in Engle (1986: 36).

[12]Though there was scope for individuals to adopt various strategies and counter-strategies (see Susan Shirk's Competitive Comrades 1982) and for use of particularistic relationships (**guanxi**) to circumvent bureaucratic and egalitarian norms (e.g. see Walder 1986: 181-5).

colleagues earned. In 1978, 99.9% of workers were employed directly or indirectly by the state, of whom 78.5% worked in state **danwei** (Davis 1990: 89).[13]

6.2 Reform Era Policies: From Coagulation to Speculation

It was against this background of relative egalitarianism, limited scope for individual choice over key life events and a minimal range of social statuses that reforms began to be introduced into urban China from 1978 onwards. Policy changes have included measures designed to re-integrate Shanghai into the global economy, delegate the power to make economic decisions to enterprise managers, increase marketization and a de-politicization of urban life. These reforms have introduced new dimensions of choice, indeed, the very concept of "choice", into the lives of many Shanghainese. For instance, to the original two types of enterprise have been added small scale private entrepreneurs, joint ventures, private businesses, wholly foreign owned companies and limited companies. However, until the early 1990s most of these changes were gradual and piecemeal with many fundamental elements of the Maoist era only barely modified.

According to numerous local testimonies changes of a new magnitude did not take place until 1992. A great number of informants considered comments made by Deng Xiaoping during his "southern inspection tour" (**nanxun**) at Chinese New Year in 1992 as the key stimulus to far-reaching changes in economic and social policy in Shanghai. A brief excerpt from a radio broadcast during his visit forms the prologue to the play "OK Stock". Deng was widely reported to have said that Shanghai should "seize the opportunity" (**zhuazhu shiji**), have "more courage" (**danzi da yidian**) and "take faster steps" (**buzi kuai yixie**) in reform. These comments may sound highly enigmatic to Western ears but in Shanghai they translated into a qualitative change in the pace and scope of economic and social policy reforms.

In 1992 China's central government declared a national aim to create a "socialist market economy" in China. As a crucial adjunct to this Shanghai was earmarked to become an international financial and commercial centre. The fledgling Shanghai share market has been a key beneficiary of this new emphasis.

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[13]21.4% were in collective industries and 0.1% in private occupations. In 1987, 70% were in state **danwei**, 25.3% in collective and 4.6% privately employed (Davis 1990: 89).

6.3 The Shanghai Share Market[14]

One Shanghai textile factory is recorded as having "quietly" issued stock in 1981 (Engle 1986: 36). However, it was not until November 1984 that shares were first sold officially to the Shanghai public when the collectively owned Shanghai *Feile Audio Company* issued 10,000 shares at 50¥ each. A couple of months later *Yanzhong Industrial Company* issued shares to the public. In August 1986, the People's Bank of China established an over-the-counter market in Shanghai (another was set up in Shenyang). At this time *Feile* and *Yanzhong* were the only stocks traded on this market. During this "experimental phase" transactions were carried out in eight offices.[15] Prices were relatively static and most transactions completed by hand with little in the way of electronic equipment. Lack of communication facilities meant that sometimes the same stock had different prices at different trading centres. Little over five years later, the Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE) had moved to paperless trading - a system deemed too costly to introduce on the London Stock Exchange - and real time trading via satellite across China. Despite this, a distinct Chinese characteristic is that the SSE still closes for lunch from 11.30am until 1pm.

The Shanghai Stock Exchange was officially opened on 19 December, 1990 just over six months before China's other official stock exchange in Shenzhen.[16] By 1994, on an active day its daily turnover rivalled that of the Hong Kong stock exchange (Karmel 1994: 1111). The SSE uses a real-time dealing system - Securities Trading Automated Quotations System (STAQS) - based on the US NASDAQ. The eight quoted stocks had a combined capitalization of just one billion *yuan*. As early as the closing months of 1990, some 400,000 people (1-3%) of Shanghai's population had already taken part in securities trading activities.[17] However, it was in 1992 that "share fever" really took hold. In that year trading volume increased tenfold and the SSE index quadrupled in the space of a few months.[18] Until late 1991 only the original eight companies were listed on the Shanghai

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[14]The main sources for the information in this section are Karmel 1994, "Shanghai: Stock Market Re-established" BR 132(18): 19-23, Xia *et al* 1992, "China's Stock and Bond Market" BR 1989, 32(44): 20-23, Engle 1986: 35-38.

[15]China Newsletter Nov-Dec 1987 (71): 19-21.

[16]China's second stock exchange in Shenzhen was set up on 3 July 1991.

[17]The lower figure is from Xia *et al* 1992: 113, the higher figure of 3% (for 1989) from BR 1989, 132(18): 22.

[18]Source *BBC World Service*, World Business Report, 25 March 1993.

share market. By the first half of 1993 there were 67 stocks with a capitalization of 200 billion *yuan*. By the end of 1993 there were about one hundred listed stocks.[19]

In one year (to November 1993) the number of centres where one could buy and sell shares increased from 25 to over 300. The manager of one of these dealing centres told me that such centres "now outnumber state rice selling depots in the city." Trading volume on the SSE increased at an incredible rate - in 1992 turnover was US $11.17 billion - six times the figure for 1991. By 1994, dealing on a single day could be more than the whole of 1991. Between January-June 1994 turnover was 563 billion *yuan* (US $64.7 billion) 14% more than the total for 1993.[20] By May 1994, Shanghai listed stocks had a market capitalization of over US $25 billion.[21]

By mid 1993 the number of Shanghainese registered on the SSE rose to over one million with 60,000 new stock exchange accounts being opened each week.[22] One report in August 1993 gives the number of Shanghai investors as two million,[23] a Chinese source has the same figure in December 1993.[24] Even taking the lower figure of one million, if each registration represents one family and each family has four members one can estimate that the stock market touches the lives of about four million people, roughly one third of Shanghai's population, in a significantly direct fashion.

The Shanghai "stock craze" was sparked off by the issuing of share purchase certificates (**rengouzheng**) in February 1992. These certificates were a form of lottery system, in which winning tickets gave the holder the right to buy shares at their issue price. Whether by design or accident the proportion of winning coupons was far higher than originally expected. On the black market coupons with a face value of 30¥ were soon being sold for as much as 1,400¥. One tragi-comic motif in the play "OK Stock" concerns an uneducated elderly men who unwittingly buys 3,000¥ of **rengouzheng** whilst trying to deposit his life savings in the bank. Once he realizes his mistake he desperately tries to

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[19]There are two main types of share, A and B. A-shares are in Chinese *yuan* and can only be bought by Chinese citizens. B-shares, first issued in Shanghai in early 1992, must be paid for using hard currency and are intended for foreigners or Chinese bringing in money from overseas. Most of the data in this paper relates to the far larger A-share market, although many aspects would be equally applicable to the B-share market. By the end of 1993 there were about a dozen B-shares.

[20]SS 12 July 1994: 7.

[21]"Bears in a China Shop" The Economist 14 May 1994: 111-2.

[22]Source BBC World Service *World Business Report* 24 June 1993.

[23]Economic Reporter China Market 1993 (8): 25.

[24]XMWB 5 December 1993: 5.

get a refund for this "waste paper". He finally manages to off-load the coupons, at a discount, on a sympathetic neighbour. Only then does the value of these coupons become apparent... An initial outlay of 3,000¥ could ultimately translate into shares worth 300,000-500,000¥ - in the space of a few weeks a new wealthy group was created in Shanghai. These certificates have passed into Shanghai popular mythology with stories of people who bought them by mistake and unexpectedly became wealthy overnight. One informant remarked to me that they had become like a child's fairy tale which people hope will be repeated.

6.3.1 "Socialist Shares Can Only Go Up!"[25]

The Shanghai stock index is characterized by sharp fluctuations. The first big crash was in 1992 when prices plummeted to 300 after the SSE index had reached over 1,300. Then after reaching over 1,500 in early 1993 the A-share index fell for eighteen months, losing around 80% of its value, to a low of 328.9 at the end of July 1994. On one day alone, 21 April 1994, the market fell by 5.8% to 552.5. In August the government announced a series of "market rescue measures" including a freeze on new issues for the rest of the year.[26] Investors reacted with "volcanic enthusiasm."[27] In the week 29 July to 5 August 1994 the SSE index rose by 104%, up from 349 to 683 with a weekly turnover of US $3.9 billion and 5.7 billion shares traded. Just over one month later, by 7 September, the SSE had exceeded the 1,000 level. A rise of this magnitude would take several years on the London or New York stock exchanges. By mid October the index had fallen back to 650. Individual shares can be even more volatile. In October 1993 *Yanzhong Company* was subject to a takeover attempt and its share price fluctuated dramatically - at one point its value quadrupled in the space of a few hours.

Unlike Western share markets which are dominated by pension funds and other institutional investors on the Shanghai market individuals accounted for 90% of the dealing in "society individual shares" (**shehui geren gu**).[28] In work places, homes, buses and restaurants all over the city shares became a main topic of conversation. A vogue

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[25]A line spoken by one of the characters in "OK Stock". Later in the play this character attempts suicide after losing all his money and the savings of his best friend.

[26]Details and following figures from SS 9 August 1994: 7.

[27]CD 5 August 1994: 1.

[28]In the UK less than 20% of shares are held by individuals. China is considering whether to allow pension funds and other institutions to trade in shares.

expression asserted that **quanguo jiegu** - the whole country likes shares. A scientific research worker told me that "in Shanghai everyone buys shares, from elderly housewives who normally just stay at home doing the housework to high level cadres and intellectuals, from teenagers to old people in their seventies and eighties." In 1992-4, every day, on television, after the early evening news the latest shares prices of all the increasing number listed companies were read out to the sound of a piped version of *A Whiter Shade of Pale*. These bulletins and numerous newspaper, television and radio references to shares all contributed to a high degree of awareness and a considerable degree of active involvement in the share market.

Many people could hardly believe the changes now taking place in their city. A retired teacher noted how some people could now make millions from shares, and described how his neighbour's house had been searched by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. The neighbour had been dragged from his house, beaten, paraded through the streets, and abused as a "capitalist". His "crime" was that a few dozen *yuan* of worthless, pre-1949 share certificates had been found. Faced with this incongruity the retired teacher remarked that along with many other people he had not yet "changed his thinking" (**huan naodai**) in the way official rhetoric now exhorts citizens to do.

The expression **chao gupiao**, literally to "stir fry" shares, refers to the rapid buying and selling of shares. The verb here is taken from the action used in stir frying food in a wok. Following Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) contention that metaphor may be both expressive and constitutive of meaning I will use the indigenous term rather than the English "buying and selling shares" which lacks the pungency and sense of rapid motion implicit in the Chinese term. In Chinese cookery timing is often crucial with fierce heat and a short cooking time. An expert share dealer told me that one should "stir fry" stocks until they are very hot, that is buy and sell them very rapidly, and thereby cook-up a profit. The way shares were often bought on a short term basis was paralleled by a more general short-termism, a sense that one had better make money whilst it was still possible. Some of my informants describes the current apparent economic boom in Shanghai as just **paomo**, a "bubble". Many people feared that unrest may follow the death of Deng Xiaoping. One **dahu** commented that on the day Deng dies Shanghai stocks will fall by 80%. Although he added that, if you held your nerve, this could be an ideal buying point.

One dealing centre manager, a man in his early forties and a keen football player, provided some fascinating remarks which highlighted the "Chineseness" of the Shanghai share market. In one of several discussions I asked him if many people had their own

computer software and could buy and sell shares from home. He estimated that about one hundred people in Shanghai had a home computer loaded with market analysis software. However, he considered it unlikely that many people would deal from home in this way because of the nature of the Shanghai share market. In his estimation, if they were so isolated (**gejue**) they would be unable to deal successfully since Shanghai has an irrational (**feilixing**) and highly emotional share market (**ganqing nong de gushi**) in which **shiqi** and **renqi** are extremely important. These terms defy simple translation. **Shi** means "city", **ren** has various meanings including "person, human being, people" but also "personality, character" and "state of one's health, how one feels." **Qi**, he explained, was used here in the sense it is used in Chinese medicine - the dictionary definition for **qi** is "vital energy, energy of life" - and that it includes, for example, "people's feeling or mood" (**ren de qingxu**). He noted that because the share market has this character it is necessary to hear the "talk of the masses" (**qunzhong yilun**) in order to pick up on the **renqi**. He added that the share market is affected by "a climate created by everybody" (**dajia zaocheng de qihou**) and that even factors such as the weather can effect it. The way in which he describes the share market as affected by "feelings" (**ganqing**) ties in with wider indigenous notions of China as a "feelings country" (**renqing guojia**).

It is interesting to mention the official reasons why a nominally socialist state should have so successfully implemented policies which Margaret Thatcher described in Britain as "popular capitalism". An article in China Daily on the stock system noted that "some people rejected it as a capitalist practice" but added that this belief has "faded".[29] A prime motive for issuing stocks and bonds was to raise funds for investment and construction. In 1992, issuing stocks to the public raised 11.8 billion *yuan* (US $2 billion) for construction in the city.[30] Indeed a Chinese newspaper article suggested following the example of countries like Britain where shares of government-owned monopolies were sold to the public to "get rid of the financial burdens posed by subsidies to these enterprises."[31] Stock holding promotes decentralization, making enterprises answerable to stock holders rather than government ministries. It was also intended to consolidate companies' decision-making power and enhance employees' participation and motivation

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[29]"Companies Face Major Reform in Share-holding" CD 21 September 1992: 4.

[30]CD 13 January 1993: 1.

[31]"Stock Market Problems Require Ironing Out" CD 4 February 1993: 4.

by making them share-holders in their companies, thereby strengthening "enterprises vitality."[32] The government also regarded huge personal bank deposits as a "caged tiger" which, if released would cause havoc in the consumer marketplace (Xia 1990: 18). Issuing shares would be a positive way to use this money. In addition, the state receives tax revenue from share transactions - 3/1000 of each deal is earmarked for the government and the exchange receives 4/1000.

Local commentators often used a metaphor from computing to talk about changes in their city, they speak of "hardware" (**yingjian**) and "software" (**ruanjian**). "Hardware" includes plant and machinery, organizational structures and economic efficiency. "Software" - my main concern in this chapter - refers to changes in people's way of thinking (**ren de sixiang gaibian**) and mode of lifestyle (**shenghuo fangshi**), that is, 'culture' in the two senses of symbolic expression and organizational practices. Inevitably, this vocabulary is also linked to discussions of the share market and its effects.

Proponents of the stock exchange experiment argued that it brings benefits to both the "hardware" and the "software". They stressed that issuing shares would "enliven" (**bianhuo**) the "dead" (**si**) economy and lead to increased efficiency and better quality products.[33] However, I heard contesting views in Shanghai. In local slang some shares were referred to as "rubbish shares" (**lajigu**), shares in companies which produced unmarketable goods and issued shares primarily as a means for staving off bankruptcy. A similar term was "mistress shares" (**qingfugu**). It was explained to me that such shares could be profitable if "fooled around with" for a short time but definitely should not be held for a long time. It was also said that workers who had now become shareholders in their companies had a more positive attitude towards their work. I did not research this specific topic but a television comedy sketch I watched hinted at potential problems. In the sketch a female shop assistant has just become a shareholder in her company. The comedy dwells upon her repeated and unsuccessful attempts to be polite to customers now that she will benefit, indirectly, in the profits of the company.

6.3.2 The *Nouveaux Riches* in Shanghai

The Shanghai stock market has made a significant contribution to the formation of

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[32]"China's Stock and Bond Market" BR 1989, 32(44): 22-3.

[33]Ajit Singh (1992) suggests that over the last forty years non-stock-market economies such as West Germany and Japan have performed much better than stock-market-dominant countries such as the US and the UK. He concludes that a stock market in China would make little contribution to the "forces of production" and could be negative by contributing to overall instability.

a new wealthy stratum in Shanghai. I met one **dahu** in the coffee lounge of the five star Garden Hotel. I asked him about the impact of the share market and other reforms on Shanghai. He motioned to the luxurious surroundings. "Five years ago the guests here were all foreigners, now look, they are mainly Chinese."

The consensus of opinion among my informants was that the new wealthy stratum in Shanghai was comprised of people in the following categories: share dealers (**dahu**);[34] private businessmen (**siying qiyejia**); small-scale private entrepreneurs (**getihu**); business people who act as middle men for foreign companies; those who had been abroad, made money and returned to Shanghai (**guowai huilai de**); families who had property confiscated during the Maoist era returned to them; labour contractors (**baogongtou**) - who arrange for labourers from poorer areas to come to Shanghai; popular singers and actors; and the sons and daughters of high Communist Party cadres (**gaogan zidi**). Of these nine categories successful share dealers were considered the most numerous. Rich share dealers I interviewed had appropriated a dialect term *ma ma ha*/**momohei** ("inky black") to describe a large amount of money - the image is of so much money that it cannot be clearly seen, it conveys a sense of uncountable, unimaginable riches.

Until the late 1970s the state advocated "class struggle" (**jieji douzheng**) to root out and eradicate any class deemed antagonistic to the proletarian. Since the official rhetoric and ideology remains socialist, or more exactly "socialism with Chinese characteristics", it would be a radical step to admit that there is now a new "class" (**jieji**) in Chinese society. At present the *nouveaux riches* are officially described as a stratum (**jieceng**), although there is some debate about whether they constitute a class (**jieji**), a far more ideologically loaded term. I asked a social science researcher in Shanghai about this debate. In answering my question he neatly sidestepped this issue by referring to peasants, workers, cadres and intellectuals before 1979 as constituting "groups" (**qunti**) or "circles" (**quanzi**). He then used the same terms to describe a new **qunti** consisting of bosses (**laoban**), small scale private entrepreneurs (**getihu**), factory managers (**changzhang**), businessmen (**shangren**) and managers (**jingli**). He commented that alongside the emergence of this new **quanzi** that there is now much greater social mobility between the other four **quanzi**.

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[34]Some people used this term to refer to all wealthy people. Shanghainese often commented that the Beijing equivalent of **dahu** was **dakuan**, a term which referred to rich people in general. The degree of semantic confusion is symptomatic of the newness of the term and the degree of flux in Shanghai.

6.3.3 "Share People": Shanghai Punters

Share dealers in Shanghai were collectively referred to as **gumin** - "share people". They were divided into three categories, **xiaohu** or **sanhu** (small or "dispersed" **hu**), **zhonghu** (middle **hu**) and **dahu** (big **hu**).[35] The vast majority of share buyers were "small **hu**" with no more than several thousand *yuan*.[36] The crowded ground floor of each securities house branch office was where "small **hu**" **chao gupiao**, unheated in the freezing winter, stifling in the hot, humid summers. The latest share prices were displayed on a large black electronic screen, the audience peering anxiously at the constantly changing red figures making careful notes and computations. Shares were bought and sold over a counter. These places had all the noise, bustle and excitement (**renao**) of more traditional markets. Individuals who wished to buy and sell shares must first register and make an initial deposit of 5,000¥. They were then issued with a plastic magnetic card on which details were kept of their account balance, deals and share holdings.

Each of Shanghai's more than three hundred dealing centres had a special dealing room or rooms, **dahushi**. These were "special spaces" (**teshu kongjian**) for the sole use of those **dahu** who pay a monthly membership fee.[37] One medium-sized centre I visited had 6,000-7,000 registered "small **hu**" and three **dahushi**. Typically, these rooms had comfortable seating, air conditioning, individual computer terminals loaded with systems to analyze and track share movements and a receptionist who used a "hot line" (**rexian**) to phone direct to the SSE to buy and sell shares for members. In slack periods **dahu** chatted or played mahjongg. Many dealing centres also had a separate room for "middle **hu**", these provided a lower level of service than the **dahushi**. The entrance requirement for a **zhonghushi** was around 300,000¥, whilst the monthly wage of most Shanghainese was between 300-1,000¥.

There were no statistics for the number of **dahu** nor was there a strict definition of who could be called a **dahu**. In the early years of the agricultural reforms propaganda praised "ten thousand *yuan* households". A local Shanghai rhyme adapted this and exaggerating somewhat asserted that: ten thousand *yuan* households are not even worth considering, one hundred thousand is just a first step, one million can be considered small

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[35]The categories of **dahu** and **sanhu** are discussed in detail in Hertz 1994: 115-78.

[36]A survey in Shanghai found a preponderance of younger investors - 68% being under the age of 40. Those with shares valued under 50,000¥ totalled 90.7%, under 5,000¥ were 26.49%. ("**Zhongguo Gumin Reng Zai 'Yinger Qi'**" (Chinese Share Buyers Still at 'Infant Stage') XMWB 22 March 1993: 12.

[37]"**Gupiao Dahushi**" (Big Time Share Dealers Room) MZWYB 17-23 May 1993: 4.

fry, ten million is a **dahu** (**wan yuan bu shi hu, shiwan cai qibu, baiwan suan xiaohu, qianwan shi dahu**). The manager of a dealing centre estimated that there were between ten and twenty thousand **dahu** in Shanghai. This estimate, which seems reasonable, was based upon the assumption that each centre had an average of thirty **dahu**. The funds required to be entitled to use **dahushi** varied. In some centres it required 500,000, in others 1,000,000 even 2,000,000¥. During the extended eighteen month bear market (**xiongshi**) - described as a "cold" (**leng**) period in the market - the requirement in some centres was lowered to 200,000¥. Some **dahu** used funds of friends and colleagues or acted on behalf of **danwei**. Not all share dealers who might be eligible wished to use a **dahushi**. Certainly the **dahu** constituted only a tiny percentage in a city of some twelve million people, an exceptional elite *par excellence*.

Some of the new indigenous terms concerning share dealing indicated that not all participants made a profit. One such term was **ge rou** - to cut or slice a piece of meat (from one's own body). This referred to selling shares at a loss, in the expectation that they would fall further still. Another term was **taozhu** ("stuck fast"), which occurred when shares fell below the price they were bought for and the owner waits in the hope that their value will rise again. A problem for those with such negative equity was that Shanghai shares were extremely volatile - they "turn somersaults" (**fan gentou**). It was difficult to gauge when prices had reached their lowest point or, in picturesque local slang, when the market had "shat itself clean" (*gu si sa qing zang*/**gushi la qingchu**). Another term was **tiaolou**, which has two meanings. One is to commit suicide by jumping out of a tall building - for several decades Shanghai was the only city in China with tall enough buildings to make this a feasible means of suicide. The second meaning is of shares falling rapidly in value.

A whole new mythology of anecdotes and stories propagated by magazines, cheap novels and endless gossip surrounded **dahu**. An early hero of this sort (from c.1989) was Yang Baiwan, "Millions" Yang, a former warehouse worker and the first person to publicly make a million on the share market from an initial capital of just 2-3,000¥. A dealing centre manager mused that "Yang Baiwan is no big deal now. There are people with far more money than him but they keep quiet about it."

Aside from celebrities such as "Millions" Yang there appeared to be a tendency for **dahu** to maintain a low profile. The manager of a dealing centre noted that many **dahu** live "very simple and hard lives" (**shenghuo hen pusu, hen jianku**). He suggested that they may be afraid to reveal their wealth as people may harm (**anhai**) them or try to

borrow money from them. He added that while many Chinese people seek fame and wealth (**jiang mingli**) **dahu** mostly want only wealth (**li**) and not fame (**ming**). I share this impression. A particulary striking example was the home of one female **dahu** I visited. Single and just under forty, she displayed no evidence of her wealth. Her tiny one room flat, where she lived alone, had no television, no new furniture and no heating. In fashion-conscious Shanghai she still wore the deeply unfashionable black canvas shoes one now only sees worn in the countryside. Some **dahu** wore the latest imported brand name (**mingpai**) fashions. However, as in the instance of this woman, some showed no outward signs of wealth. Another **dahu** remarked that wealthy businessmen were more likely to wear famous brand names since they need to display their status to foster their business activities whilst "share dealers only interact with a computer (**gupiaozhe zhi he diannao da zhaohu**)." Entrances to **dahushi** often appeared to be deliberately discrete. One I visited was reached via a narrow passage, past overflowing rubbish bins and up a flight of stairs and into an unmarked door.

I was curious to know how **dahu** used their new wealth. In popular perceptions those who rapidly made a fortune (**baofahu**) spent money lavishly and wastefully, especially on restaurant meals and leisure pursuits such as karaoke bars. **Dahu** I spoke with agreed that some may spend a portion of their wealth in this way but were keen to stress that further investment was more common. They bought more shares, and/or moved into other "craze" sectors, opening restaurants, real estate or futures. Some would "**chao**" anything from golf club membership cards to a tiny plot of land in the United States. One young **dahu**, a 26 year old man, spent part of his cash on compact discs of British heavy rock music. Another **dahu** bought three houses for US $30-40,000 each in the nearby city of Suzhou which he described as long term investments. He also owned a restaurant and had set up a small factory. When we discussed his plans for the future he talked about his hopes for his daughter. He suggested that he may arrange for her to study at Oxford or Harvard. These were long term plans, for his daughter was only three months old.

Since 1949 the Chinese state has promoted a series of selfless models for emulation. Most famous of these is Lei Feng. In the early 1990s some successful share dealers were joining this august panoply with press articles giving examples of **dahu** who used their money in a socially useful way. For example, Nanfang Zhoumo carried a story of a woman who came to Shanghai as a maid but made a fortune share dealing.[38] Instead of

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[38]"The Women Who Surge into the Share Wave" ("**Yongjin Guchao de Nurenmen**") NFZM 18 June 1993: 1.

staying in Shanghai she decided to return to her home village and set up a factory. In a similar way, newspaper articles commended "Millions" Yang for giving money to a poor rural school and taking up an unpaid university post.[39] He was also praised for not moving from Shanghai's "lower quarter" where he grew up.

Perceptions of who was successful and who failed in the share market engaged with indigenous notions about the characteristics of different categories of person. For instance, gender-based stereotypes were evident in explanations for the predominance of male **dahu** - only about one in eight of the **dahu** was female.[40] One female **dahu** felt that men have "greater boldness" (**poli**) and are "more decisive" (**guoduan**) than women. Women she characterized as "irresolute and hesitant" (**you rou guaduan**). She added that often if a husband and wife embark upon share dealing one of them retains a **danwei** place in order to retain benefits such as free medical treatment for themselves and their children.[41] In such cases this was generally the female, since, in my informant's view, they are "domestic-natured" (**jiatingxing**), whilst men are "naturally inclined to gamble" (**duxing da**).

A younger woman who did not feel attracted to buy shares felt that standing around outside a securities exchange was inappropriate for women. A young teacher noted that since men and women **chao gupiao** in a different way that a husband and wife ought not to cooperate in this (**bu hao hezuo**) activity. Men he considered as having "greater courage" (**danzi da**) and "blacker hearts" (**xin hei yidian**) whilst women are "less courageous" (**danzi xiao yidian**) and more "flexible" (**tanxing**).

One **dahu** commented that the way people buy shares depends upon such factors as their "cultural/educational level" (**wenhua cengci**), amount of capital and their "personality" (**xingge**). Regional stereotypes also entered the share discourse. Shanghainese expressed pride in the orderly way in which shares were issued in their city. They compared this favourably to the situation in Shenzhen in August 1992 when up to one million people tried to buy share application forms. In the ensuing chaos, and amidst allegations of official corruption over share allocations, there were demonstrations in which

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[39]"**Yang Baiwan**" (Millions Yang) SWHYSB 4-10 June 1993: 4.

[40]A Chinese article disagrees with the view that "shares are a male hobby". It points out that "of course" most **dahu** are men but that there are also female **dahu**. ("**Shanghai Tan de Nu Gumin**" (Female Share Dealers in Shanghai) Dadi Monthly 1993 No. 6: 22-3).

[41]Families who adopt this type of strategy were described to me as having **yi jia, liang zhi** ("one family, two systems"), a play upon the "one nation, two systems" policy officially adopted for the administration of Hong Kong after 1997.

the riot police fired tear gas.[42]

There were two main types of view about the kind of people who were **dahu**. Sometimes there was a sense of injustice, that "fools" (**shagua/gandu**) did well where experts lost out. A young teacher who bought shares himself suggested that those who most successfully **chao gupiao** tended to be "people without much **wenhua** and of rather low quality" (**suzhi bijiao di**).[43] He considered that few intellectuals successfully **chao gupiao** because they read too many books which left them "rather lacking in courage" (**danzi bijiao xiao**). The contrary and, I gauge, dominant view was that **dahu** were people who "have great ability" (**benshi hen da**) and good connections. A young television worker said that the rich in general were "sharp witted" (*dü zi hua lo*/**touzi huatou**) and could "exploit loopholes" (**zuan kongzi**). A cotton factory worker in her mid forties felt that **dahu** were *laozhu* who knew to buy the share purchase certificates (**rengouzheng**) mentioned above. *Lao zu* is the dialect term for **laogui** - literally "old devil". She explained that a *lao zu* is somebody who is "experienced" (**laolian**) and "extremely sharp" (*men kɛ jing lɛ xi*/**menkan feichang jing**) and can analyze shares. Some regarded the *nouveaux riches* as "upstarts" (**baofahu**). However, a female office worker told me that Shanghai share dealers who got rich quick were not **baofahu** and that this term was more appropriately used of Cantonese who became rich quickly. She reasoned that Cantonese are "without ability" (**meiyou benshi**) while to be a **dahu** requires "ability" (**benshi**). In her estimation "**dahu** are not like ordinary people", she seemed to consider them as possessing almost superhuman powers.

6.4 Criticisms and Problems of the Market

To present a balanced account it is now necessary to highlight some of the negative comments which were made about the market. An extremely visible and potentially highly divisive development in early 1990s Shanghai was the increasing gap between rich and poor. The ambiguous nature of the newly rich was brought home to me in a chance meeting with a university student. This young man, from Hunan province, had made some money by buying and selling televisions and then by **chao gupiao**. Like other Chinese students he lived in a dormitory with six other students. I asked if his room mates knew about his activities. He said they did not and that they would be jealous (**duji**) if they knew. The exclusivity of space was notable. I met him in a comparatively expensive restaurant little

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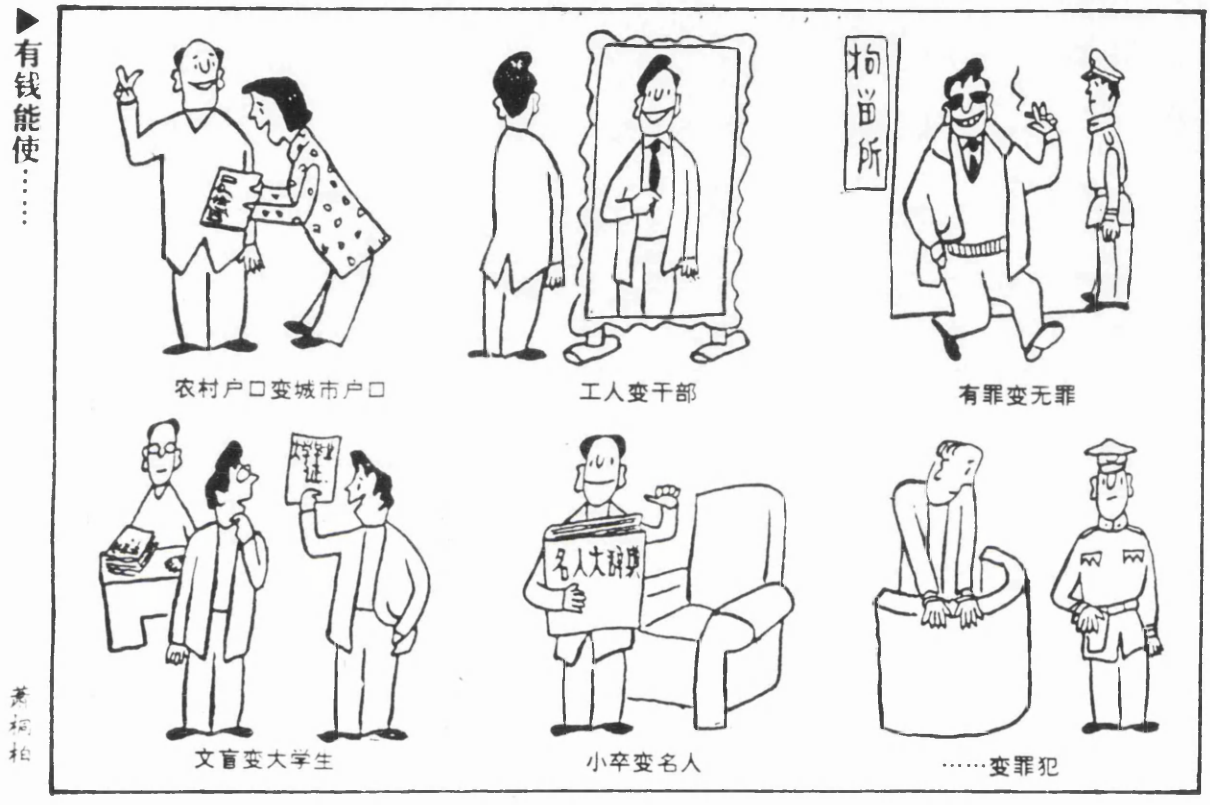
[42]"Chinese Speculators Riot over Shares Chaos" FT 11 August 1992: 14.

[43]The term **suzhi** is defined as "innate quality" but the ambience of this word is very broad.

over one hundred metres from the main entrance to his university. I asked him how he would explain being able to eat in such a place if his room mates should chance upon him. He said that this would not happen, since the restaurant was so expensive for them "they would not even dream of coming near here." His other leisure time activities also placed him in spaces where his fellow students would not contemplate going such as expensive karaoke bars and the dance floor of expensive international hotels such as the Portman.



Cartoon 12 Caption "Money Can Make... [from left to right, top to bottom] a rural household registration into an urban one, a worker into a cadre, a guilty person into an innocent one, an illiterate person into a university student, a nobody in to a famous person,... into a guilty person."
(**Manhua Shijie** - The World of Cartoons - 1994 No. 16)

On the occasion I met a **dahu** in a large five star *Garden Hotel* the coffee and small cakes eaten by us that afternoon cost the equivalent of two weeks salary for most Shanghai workers. This is symptomatic of the rapidly growing inequality within China, an inequality which often bred resentment. A cotton factory worker in her mid forties complained to me that "those of us who have to go out to work miss out. We cannot spend all our time at the dealing centre, we can only scrabble to pick up the crumbs left behind by the **dahu**." She added that **dahu** get to eat the "big meat" and "small **hu**" only the "small meat" (**dahu chi da rou, xiaohu chi xiao rou**). In part, she believed, like many others, that **dahu** may act together to deliberately push a share's price up or down, for example, by spreading

rumours.[44] She also stressed the necessity in **chao gupiao** of having quick access to information (**xiaoxi lingtong**) feeling that **dahu** had information which people such as herself lacked. Communications technology was increasingly important in Shanghai and the degree of access or lack of access to it an important factor in redefining the social contours of Shanghai. This factory worker complained that "small **hu**" were "put at a disadvantage" (**chikui**) by **dahu** because **dahu** could act much more rapidly. Whilst "small **hu**" had to queue at the trading counters and wait to buy or sell shares, **dahu** could deal by phone. Some people also had an "information machine" (**xinxiji**), a pager which could show the latest share prices and other messages.

However, **dahu** also had their complaints. All shares listed on the SSE are at least 51% owned by the state. Add to this the tight grip the state still retained over information and it takes little imagination to realise that it could be the ultimate "insider trader". One **dahu** told me that "the **laobaixing** can tell from the volume of turnover in a share whether the government is buying or selling them." There was a widespread belief that the market was frequently manipulated by this hidden hand to the benefit of those in positions of power and that the sons and daughters of high party officials (**gaogan zidi**) gained the most. For instance, their special privileges (**tequan**) enable them to obtain shares at their low issue price. A retired worker expressed the view that those with access to information could become rich but that the **laobaixing** could not get into this circle (**quanzi**). This sense of unfairness and exclusion was common in Shanghai. Equally typical was the way in which the **laobaixing** are depicted as an entity acted upon. Legal regulation over the market was minimal and there was often no fair means of enforcing such laws as did exist. For instance, laws were introduced to stop senior officials buying shares but this did not prevent relatives buying them on their behalf.[45] Foreign commentators also consider the Shanghai share market an "insider's market" with insider trading rampant, a highly confused regulatory framework, lack of disclosure and dubious use of flotation proceeds.[46]

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[44]Hertz found evidence of **dahu** acting in cartels in order to manipulate the market, she describes them as "manipulating the crowds of smaller investors, whose losses are the *dahu* gains" (1994: 227). By the time of my research, I was told by **dahu** that the increased capitalization value of Shanghai's share market made such manipulation much less possible.

[45]An article described how "when the stock economy just opened, in order to encourage the masses, the secretary of the Shenzhen Municipal Committee of the CPC took the lead in subscribing for stocks". But once municipal government cadres owning stocks became "a sensitive and explosive problem in Shenzhen" it was clearly stipulated that cadres were not allowed to hold stocks ("Rising Stocks" Women of China 1992, 10: 32-3).

[46]For instance see "Babes in the Bourse" FEER 16 July 1992: 48-54 and "Shanghai: Capital of China's Get-Rich-Quick Capitalism" FEER 23 June 1994: 54-56.

The disruptive effect of the share market upon many work units included not only unsanctioned absences from work but also the impact of the craving for information. Shanghai radio stations recited the latest share prices every hour. In many work places workers were forbidden to listen to the radio during work hours since they paid more attention to stock prices than their work. Many work units forbade workers from carrying pagers for the same reason. A worker at the giant *Baogang* steel plant commented that there, not only were pagers prohibited but also workers were not allowed to discuss shares whilst at work. I watched a short play, a black comedy, called "Three Minutes Late" (**Wanle San Fen Zhong**) put on by a neighbourhood drama group. This illustrated, melodramatically, popular perceptions of this problem. It featured a young girl who was injured and taken to hospital. The doctor is busy on the phone checking the latest share prices impervious to the frantic demands of the girl's distraught father. The inevitable outcome is that the girl is dead by the time he has finished his dealing. Actual experience may be just as cruel. Following the first big market crash of October 1992 there were reports of suicides of people who had lost their life savings and often money borrowed from friends and relatives.[47]

The share market provided new scope for criminal activities and Shanghai newspapers had begun to report the first crop of court cases of people caught using their company's funds to buy shares in the hope of making a quick profit and replacing the "borrowed" money before anyone noticed. In one case a 24 year old accountant used a total of 840,000¥ of company money to get into a **dahu** dealing room and buy and sell shares.[48] In another case four securities workers were jailed because they had misappropriated company funds to finance their own stock trading.[49] One of them, a 20 year old computer operator, used 4.8 million *yuan* (US $842,000) to trade shares. He was given a twenty year jail sentence for this. In another case a 35 year old female accountant in a hotel in Yangpu district used fake receipts to obtain some 10,000 *yuan* to give to her

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[47]In March 1994, in the first court case over suicide, the widow of a factory worker was awarded a 50,000¥ "humanitarian settlement" (FEER 5 May 1994: 82).

[48]"**Chaogu Dahu Yuanshi Tanwu Dahu**" (Share Dealing Rich Man Originally was a Corrupt Rich Man) XMWB 6 December 1993: 3.

[49]"Four Securities Workers Jailed for Corruption" (CDBW 5-11 September 1993: 2).

husband to buy shares.[50]

Even share market officials I met in Shanghai rarely described share buying as investment. Instead they invariably said that the Shanghai share market was speculative (**touji**) and, unlike share markets in other countries, did not follow economic laws (**jingji guilu**). More antipathetic views described it as "abnormal" (**bu zhengchang**). Some dealers considered **chao gupiao** as akin to gambling, one informant described his feeling on entering a share dealing centre as just the same as "entering a gambling house (**duchang**)." It should be borne in mind that gambling is illegal in China. A man in his nineties who characterised his outlook on life as predominantly Confucian commented that when he was 40-50 years old in Shanghai that making money on shares was regarded as **bu yi zhi cai** (ill-gotten gains/wealth). He added that it was what the Communist Party had called "speculation and profiteering" (**touji daoba**) to abuse capitalists. He felt that "China is becoming a gambling nation (**dubo guojia**) where everyone is 'doing business'" and that this is "extremely dangerous".

Similarly an academic of nearly seventy who stressed his Confucian outlook condemned shares as "speculation" (**touji**) and as not "dependent upon labour" (**bu kao laoli**) and "reaping without sowing" (**bu lao er huo**).[51] He stressed that it is "not honourable" (**bu guangcai**) for intellectuals to discuss money or to buy shares. He pointed out that in Shanghai dialect to call somebody (I believe that he was referring especially to intellectuals) a 'sang yi nin' (**shengyiren**) - a business man - is derogatory. It is equivalent to saying that their "way of doing things is not good" (**zuofeng bu hao**). I was particularly struck by the degree of correspondence between the Confucian views of these two men and the rhetoric of the Maoist period. There is particular piquancy in this regard since both these men had been extremely antipathetic towards the Communist Party since the early 1950s. It also highlights the extent to which certain very traditional morals - which are now being undermined - were upheld and promoted during the Maoist era under another 'label'.

6.5 Widening the Margins

The share market has played an important part in redefining the relationship of the

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[50]"**Tanwu Wan Yuan Zi Zhu Zhangfu Chaogu**" (Ten Thousand Yuan of Capital Expropriated to Help Husband Buy Shares) JFRB 6 June 1993: 3.

[51]It is notable that share dealing may also be described as "**wan gupiao**". The verb **wan** is often translated as "play" but has a wider range of meanings than this. The most salient point is that it is used for leisure activities and in opposition to work.

individual to society notably by increasing the scope for individual agency and generally widening the "zone of indifference". The opening of the share market has furthered the loosening of the reliance of the populace upon the state and provided a new space for individual initiative and creativity. As a local newspaper commented, "[i]n the turbulent wave of the commodity economy, everyone faces opportunities and choices."[52] A local sociologist remarked to me that "previously everything was arranged (**anpai**) by the government but now the market plays a much greater role." In his view, the self (**ziji, ziwo**) now had more power (**quanli**) and the government less. Such a view was also conveyed in a common expression that China now had a "small government" and a "big society" (**xiao zhengfu, da shehui**). An important site to examine such changes is the work unit (**danwei**).

As shown in earlier chapters, during the reform period the functions of **danwei** have, to an extent, been eroded. The introduction of the share market has hastened this erosion. The degree to which people could take time off work, officially or unofficially, to **chao gupiao** was indicative of this erosion. Some **dahu** resigned from their state **danwei** jobs and may be called **gupiaozhe**, that is, people whose profession is shares. In this event people were entirely free of **danwei** restrictions (and benefits). I gained the impression that "middle **hu**" generally regarded their share dealing as a subsidiary activity, a "second job" (**di er zhiye**). Those who retained the security of a place in a state work unit but did not work there in practice were said to **gua**, literally "to hang" (in the sense of "hang a shop sign") a **danwei**. The business card one **dahu** proffered to me showed that he was a clerk in a state transport unit. It soon transpired that he had not been anywhere near the unit for months but continues to **gua** this **danwei**. He observed that those at his **danwei** are jealous (**yanhong** - literally "red eyes") of his wealth. On his rare visits he did his best to avoid the topic of shares, for fear of arousing the resentment of former colleagues who only earned about 400¥ a month when he could make 10,000¥ on a good day. He considered it a characteristic of Chinese people that they look down upon (**kanbuqi**) those who have no money, but are jealous of those who are rich. He noted that this was one reason he had not bought a car.

I asked a young **dahu** who had recently resigned from his state job whether he was concerned about the associated loss of social welfare benefits (**laobao**). He agreed that some fear a loss of this guarantee but that he was young and expected that by the time he retired there would be no **laobao**. He expected that in future welfare provision would be

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[52]"Watching the Play 'OK, Stock'" ("**Kan Huaju 'OK, Gupiao'**") WHYSB 5 March 1993: 2.

covered by insurance systems and "will be a matter for society and not **danwei**."

Share dealing provided opportunities for the emergence of new forms of association and interest groups. Those who became friends through meeting at the share market may be called **guyou** - "share friends". It was also suggested that those whose shares had fallen in value and "await liberation" may be called **taoyou** - "stuck-fast friends". A newspaper article described how several "small **hu**" may combine to form a "joint naval force" (**lianhe jiandui**).[53] These small groups may be of three kinds: friends and relatives; work colleagues; those who meet by chance in the securities exchange. Most of these combined naval forces have a single person who acts as its "helmsman" (**duoshou**). It should be added that Mao Zedong used to be referred to as "the great helmsman". In the early 1990s, these watery metaphors indicate that individuals may now chart their own course in the stormy waters of the "share sea" (**guhai**).

Another article discussed a different type of "warship captain" (**jianzhang**).[54] These were "fake **dahu**" who operated using **danwei** funds. Although this activity was illegal the article observed that "above there is a strategy, below a counter strategy (**shangmian you zhengce, xiamian you duice**)." It added that these "fake **dahu**" may be acting with the full support of their **danwei** heads. The latter may give their employee access to funds and provide them with a mobile phone and a car. From comments people made to me, it appeared that especially **danwei** which were unable to make money in any other way delegated a person to buy and sell shares in this way. In the play "OK Stock" the factory in which Ah Nai works ceases to function and the leader visits Ah Nai with a proposal that they set up a "company". In practice this amounts to Ah Nai acting as a **dahu** on behalf of the **danwei**. A local newspaper gave an instance of a young female **dahu**, a former teacher, who had paid 500¥ to a doctor to sign a sick note so that she did not have to work at the school.[55] She was called into the school expecting to be reprimanded but instead the department head told her that the other teachers had pooled together 100,000¥ and wanted her to **chaogu** on their behalf. An almost identical request was made to one of my informants. She refused this role for exactly the same reason as Ah Nai, saying "if I make money that is fine, but what if I lose money?." If a **dahu** operating on behalf of a **danwei** was successful and produced substantial bonuses for

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[53]"**Shanghai Tan de Nu Gumin**" (Female Share Dealers in Shanghai) Dadi Monthly 1993 No. 6: 25.

[54]"**Gupiao Dahushi**" (Big Time Share Dealers Room) MZWYB 17-23 May 1993: 4.

[55]"**Shanghai Tan de Nu Gumin**" (Female Share Dealers in Shanghai) Dadi Monthly 1993 No. 6: 24.

fellow employees this could increase workers' benefit from being part of a work unit in opposition to the more general trend.

The share market discourse also provided more general insights into the way Shanghainese thought about the state and its actions. A middle aged man, a party member, told me that workers in his **danwei** were not allowed to buy shares since it was felt that to do so would distract them from their work. However, he was aware that colleagues did buy them stealthily, and he tacitly connived in this action. He noted, using the same expression as the newspaper article mentioned above, that "the higher levels have a strategy, the lower levels have a counter-strategy". This phrase was heard quite often in Shanghai. I would suggest that it conveys the sense ordinary Shanghainese had that they could, *en masse*, affect the way things are done. There is a sense that the **laobaixing** is not always acted upon but can constitute a kind of composite agent. This expression demonstrates the degree of space that many ordinary Shanghainese considered they now had. Such a phrase, were it uttered during the Maoist era, would have been taken as evidence of counter-revolutionary thought.

The generally declining role of the Communist Party was evident in **chao gupiao**. Party membership appeared to be irrelevant in the **dahushi**. I asked one **dahu** if he knew whether **dahu** in his **dahushi** were party members. He said that he had no idea but added that he did meet party members in his other business activities and said that he found many of them "useless" (**wonang**) and lazy. His portrayal of them struck me as similar to the way a self-made businessman might talk about an hereditary aristocracy.

In a long freewheeling discussion the **dahu** from the state transportation **danwei** elaborated on his views on life. He remarked that:

> The government tells us that money is not omnipotent (**wanneng**), but if I have money I can do many things. For example, when I go travelling tickets are often sold out, but if you pay more you can always get a ticket. I can always get a ticket. Being a share dealer I can give full vent to my talents (**fahui**). There is nothing which restrains or binds (**yueshu**) me, I am free, unrestrained (**zizai**). There is no one to tell me what to do. At my work unit the people there just sit around and drink tea and read newspapers all day. At least if I don't go there I don't drink the Communist Party's tea, I can drink my own tea at home.

Until a couple of years ago his main hope, like countless others in Shanghai, had been to go and study in America. But this had changed. "I no longer want to go to the United States" he told me, "I feel that it is easier for me make money here in China."

This man's comments make clear the way in which the share market and success in it allowed individuals a new realm of freedom. In another instance a "middle **hu**" who had spent several years working in Australia told me that he had not looked for a job since

returning to Shanghai. On returning from Australia he had felt that the most important thing was freedom (**ziyou**). He considered that this required an economic basis (**jingji jichu**) and in order to achieve this aim he had decided to **chao gupiao**. I should note that I heard several stories of Shanghainese who had embarked upon this same route and lost all the money they had saved from years working abroad (**dagong**).

Many kinds of slang and new expressions appeared with the share market. Some of these terms cast an ironic light on the state. I noted earlier the term **taozhu** - "stuck fast" - when shares are at a lower level than one paid for them. When shares rise back above their original level some **dahu** call this **jiefang** - liberation - the same term as is used for the Communist takeover in 1949. One dealer told me that since the SSE index had been as high as 1,500 and was currently at 800 that "the common people are waiting for 'liberation' (**laobaixing dengdao 'jiefang'**)." At one **dahu** dealing room I visited a group of **dahu** grouped around a computer terminal likened the events on the screen to the 1946-9 Chinese civil war. A block graph coloured red and green showed the volume of shares being traded - red being shares bought and green those sold. They called the red the People's Liberation Army and the green the Nationalist Army, and used expressions such as "the red army are coming" and "Mao Zedong has reached Beijing".

The share market gave people the chance to be agents and it was notable that the market was often spoken about in personified terms. It was often described as "childish" (**youzhi**) and "lacking in maturity" (**bu chengshu**) a term more usually applied to a person lacking maturity or an unripe fruit. The Shanghai share market was still at the "infant" (**yinger**) stage.[56]

Inevitably a desire to make money was the key motive to **chao gupiao** - sometimes this was described using an expression learnt from Marxism as **yuanshi jilei**, "primitive accumulation". However, other reasons people gave indicated a strong sense of an increased scope for individual agency and individualism. The following selection of views from various **dahu** makes this clear. An unmarried woman of forty who had recently resigned from her **danwei** told me that **chao gupiao** brought her "self fulfilment (**fahui ziji**). I **chao gupiao** to test my ability (**ziji zhangwo nengli**)." She added that now she worked for herself the "feeling of oppression/constraint" (**yayigan**) she had felt when at her **danwei** had gone. One of her favourite lines from literature was by the Russian writer Gorky: "let others say what they will, go your own way." A young **dahu** of 26 said **chao**

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[56]"**Zhongguo Gumin Reng Zai 'Yinger Qi'**" (Chinese Share Buyers Still at the 'Infant Stage') XMWB 22 March 1993: 12.

gupiao gave him a "feeling of newness" (**xinxiangan**). He stressed that in **chao gupiao** one should have "one's own characteristics" (**ziji de tese**) and added that he relied upon "feelings" (**ganjue**) and his "own judgement" (**ziji de panduan**). Since resigning from his bank job a few months earlier he had felt more relaxed (**qingsong**) and, above all, appreciated being able to arrange his own time. On another occasion I asked a group of **dahu** what they derived most from **chao gupiao**. There was a common agreement that it was "excitement" (**ciji**).

It would be a mistake to overemphasize the new degree of agency and individual choice. Many people in Shanghai undoubtedly still felt that their fate was largely beyond their hands. I spoke with a low-ranking local government worker of about fifty, who had just become a party member, soon after there had been an announcement that the number of government cadres was to be reduced. His attitude echoed almost word for word the soliloquy delivered by Ah Nai. He commented that even if he lost his present job he would not worry since "the state will always arrange things" (**zong you guojia anpai**). The **dahu** who retained his place in a transportation **danwei** felt that there had been no change there. It was just the same as before with people spending all day "reading newspapers and drinking tea."

6.5.1 Change From The Top?

It is possible to view the widening of the margins outlined above as a direct consequence of state-led reforms. However, it is intriguing to observe the extent to which economic policies adopted by the state often appeared to be reactive and *ad hoc*, in many instances legitimizing what was already happening on the ground. One informant who remarked to me on the current pace of change in Shanghai added that "what was illegal two or three months ago may now be promoted." She gave the instance of local cadres setting up street stalls, a development which had undergone just such a process. The Shanghai share market provides another good instance of this.[57]

Much evidence suggests that companies began issuing shares counter to state wishes. I noted above the Shanghai textile factory which "quietly" issued stock in 1981. Across China, between 1981-88, some 98 billion *yuan* in various stocks and bonds were

[57]Several other Chinese cities including Wuhan, Tianjin, Beijing and Tianjin have prepared facilities for a third stock exchange. Wuhan is reported to have 400 operating terminals all ready and plans a forty-storey financial centre. In each instance the local authorities hope to present the central government with a *fait accompli* (FEER 17 January 1994: 60).

issued, many of them centred in Shanghai.[58] By the end of 1989, 2,700 Shanghai companies had issued stocks and bonds (Xie 1990: 24). It appears that it was especially from 1984-5 onwards that many enterprises issued shares. According to Engle, this was primarily in response to measures introduced by the central authorities to restrict enterprises finance during 1984 (1986: 37). Similarly, another researcher on Chinese capital markets concludes that their emergence was primarily "driven by the rising investment demands of economic agents who tried to circumvent various financial restrictions and barriers" (Tam 1991: 525).

Initially most stocks were sold to employees of the issuing enterprises. Engle notes that in some instances enterprises could only "sell" stock by coercing employees to buy it (1986: 38). However, stocks were increasingly traded unofficially with especially large kerb markets in Shanghai, Sichuan and Shandong. In Shanghai, stocks were traded by "yellow oxen" (**huangniu**), a local term for black market traders.[59] I met a man in his early thirties who had engaged in this trade in Shanghai. I asked him about the legality of this trade. He agreed that it is a black market but added that "it seems to be permitted." The official SSE grew out of and has replaced this black market. In other parts of China many semi-official kerb markets continue.[60] My informant in this instance now bought and sold unlisted stock all over China. He travelled by plane, and claimed that his suitcases were stuffed with wads of Renminbi. An official publication makes clear that one reason for the establishment of stock markets in 1986 was "so as to eliminate the black market which has already appeared."[61] It is, of course, a moot point how far the state permitted such black markets as an experiment - leaving open the option to crush or legalize them at a later date. However, the sense of events moving much faster than the Party expects is evident in comments made by former Shanghai Mayor, now Deputy Premier, Zhu Rongji at the Beijing showing of "OK Stock". After watching the play Zhu is reported to have commented that when he left Shanghai two years before he would

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[58]"Shanghai: Stock Market Re-established" BR 1989, 132(18): 19.

[59]The main role of **huangniu** in the 1970s and 1980s was trading in ration coupons. With the elimination of rationing their other main activities are as touts for theatre, cinema and other types of tickets, currency dealing and trading in tax exemption certificates for imported goods.

[60]At times the state has moved to prevent the unauthorized issuing of stocks and bonds. The State Council halted the Urumqi state-owned *Hongyuan Investment Trust* from issuing 56 million *yuan* (US $9.9m) of shares. Tens of thousands of Urumqi investors were already involved in a kerb market dealing in share purchase certificates and exchanging information on this company ("Share Float Torpedoed" FEER 20 May 1993: 58-9.

[61]"Shanghai: Stock Market Re-established" BR 1989, 132(18): 21.

never have envisaged Shanghai's share market developing in the way it has.[62]

6.5.2 Blurring the Margins

Set against the growing inequality is the way the opportunities of the market can re-configure social contours. For example, I visited one dealing centre where a woman of about 35 who looked like a poor peasant came in with an old battered handbag. From it she took out an old, crumpled bag for dried milk. Inside this were 500,000¥ of Chinese government bonds. This woman's father had pulled a cart from which he sold water melons. At the same time in this room was a man in his early seventies dressed in a smart suit, complete with a gold watch and dark glasses. He lived in the exclusive Portman hotel. From 1945 he had begun to speculate on shares, gold and other commodities. He had two White Russians as bodyguards when he went to school. He once again deals on the share market. I found it interesting that these two people from very different backgrounds had now achieved a level of equality in the non-egalitarian 1990s denied to them in the Maoist age. This man advised me that "now is the best time to make money in Shanghai as it is chaotic (**luan**). When there is stability there are fewer opportunities to get rich."

By providing a new source of income the share market contributes to the generally increasing degree of ambiguity over people's incomes and tended to increase the realm of privacy. Before the reform era people had just one source of income from their work unit and would readily tell others how much this was. Now with "blurred/indistinct salary" (**mohu gongzi**) and diverse sources of "outside money" (**waikuai**), that is income apart from one's salary such as income from a second job or overseas remittances, there was a much larger zone of privacy. An economics professor suggested to me that the reluctance to ask about others salaries in the West and the comparatively common questions of this kind in China are not cultural differences *per se* but, rather, relate to the different types of economy. He suggested that as China's economy becomes increasingly similar to that of the West that in China too income levels will increasingly become a zone of privacy. He located this alongside a series of changes notably increasing individual freedom (**geren ziyou**) and competition (**jingzheng**). Although I am wary of taking this economic determinism too far, it is clear that the stock market greatly contributed to and increased the degree of ambiguity over people's incomes. This professor added that he would

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[62]"**Fangfu Chonghui Shanghai Shiguang**" (Just Like Returning to Shanghai) XMWB 5 December 1993: 5.

readily tell somebody his **danwei** salary but that he would be far less likely to divulge his full income including **waikuai**. In any event, he was unclear himself how much this would total.

The location of **dahushi**, "special spaces", in the share dealing centres paralleled the structure of Shanghai restaurants. In restaurants the better rooms are often on higher floors and/or in separate anterooms. This similarity of increasing exclusivity and privacy occurred to me one day when I went from visiting a **dahushi** to a separate dining room in a nearby restaurant with a group of **dahu**. ' In densely crowded Shanghai space is a highly desirable luxury. This physical zone of privacy also extends to personal behaviour.

The share market can also affect family relationships. In many Shanghai families husbands (occasionally these roles are reversed) turned over their monthly salary to their wives who controlled the family income (**dangjia**). The wife returns a portion of this to the husband for him to buy cigarettes and other small daily items (*si fang di*/**sifangqian**). A newspaper article cited the instance of a 43 year old female factory worker called "iron calculator" (**tie suanpan**) by her colleagues.[63] She began to buy shares secretly without telling her husband. She could do this because she is the family's "finance minister" (**caizheng buzhang**). Until she became a successful dealer she also kept her visits to the exchange from **danwei** colleagues by saying that she is going to the doctors.

In one family where the husband had made money on shares he continued to hand over his salary as before. However, his daughter-in-law said that he retained his **waikuai** (extra income) and does not disclose how much it is to the rest of the family. In another family the daughter noted that her parents' cooperation in share buying was a source of dispute between them since they each had different ideas about which shares to buy and when to buy and sell them. An example of this occurred during the East Asian Games. Both felt that the government was interfering in the market at this time but they could not agree what effect this was having. Their dispute centred upon whether to buy shares during or after the games.

The female cotton factory worker remarked that initially female colleagues "did not dare buy shares" but that this had changed. Her explanation was that at her **danwei** people talked about shares and that listeners were envious (**yanhong**) and wanted to get rich (**xiang facai**). She recalled that "at first colleagues did not talk openly about shares but only bought them secretly (**toutou momo de**). Now people at my **danwei** discuss shares

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[63]"**Shanghai Tan de Nu Gumin**" (Female Share Dealers in Shanghai) Dadi Monthly 1993 No. 6: 25.

and listen to their prices on the radio every day."[64] This women had borrowed 3,000¥ from her mother. She made enough to pay her back and continue buying shares. She now also **chao gupiao** on behalf of her two brothers, phoning them each day to tell them which shares she had bought or sold. In this instance one can see how family interdependence plays an important role in a new economic situation and is promoted by new technology.

Once somebody had become a **dahu** they had some license to recreate their past in the light of what they have now become. One 36-year-old **dahu** had been unable to study at university when he left school because of the Cultural Revolution. Instead he had worked in a factory doing heavy manual work for seven years before going to university. He stressed the importance of **fendouxing** (**fendou** - struggle, **xing** - nature) and felt that he had always had a **fendou sixiang** (thought, thinking). I asked him about his seven years in the factory. He responded, "then there was no choice...[and] although the job involved great hardship all one could do was endure (**renshou**) [cf. the comment by Ah Nai's wife that all her husband could do was **ren**]. Now there is an opportunity (**jihui**) to earn money and I seize (**zhua**) this opportunity." It is interesting how closely his words echo those of Deng Xiaoping given above that people should "seize the opportunity". He followed these comments by expressing his dislike for traditional family relationships. He felt that people must struggle (**fendou**) for themselves. I had the distinct impression that he had had to fend off requests from family members for financial assistance. His retelling of his life story was like a dramatic account, with himself cast in the starring role. He said that he felt he had a "sense of mission" (**shiminggan**), an expression with religious connotations.

In Shanghai I was often told that "people now dare to take risks" (**ganyu mao fengxian**). A dealing centre manager believed that the share market had played a significant part in encouraging people to take risks by "raising people's conceptual abilities (**ren gainian tigao**)." For instance, participation in the market had enhanced their ability to accept competition and the pressures of a market-orientated economy (**xinli chengshou yali**). He believed that "last year [1992] if somebody lost 600¥ they might commit suicide, but now they would not." He felt that after the SSE index had fallen heavily and shares been "cold" for a while that "small **hu**" were now more mature (**chengshu**). The manager stressed the need to "foster mature share people" (**peiyang chengshu de gumin**). Such a concern seems firmly placed in a Confucian ideal of moulding people through education.

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[64]A young teacher observed that co-workers often either all **chao gupiao** or none did and that usually one person leads (**daitou**) the others into it.

6.5.3 A New Need To Know

One dealer told me that "choosing shares is harder than choosing a wife."[65] In opening up the share market the government created a new need for individuals to have access to information which they must then critically assess, in ways that may be quite different to official statements. It was suggested to me that the burgeoning number of magazines, tip sheets and newspapers devoted to the share market were amongst the most "democratic" of publications. It was notable that in 1994, it was reported that several Shanghai stock market tip sheets such as Shanghai Stock Express and Shanghai Stock Information had been banned. The official reason given was that these sheets "lacked proper authorization and spread unfounded rumours."[66] A young teacher who dealt in shares explained to me the factors he considered in deciding which shares to buy, including: considerations over the sector in which the company operates; the type of products they produce and the market for them; the government policy towards each sector; the character and skills of the head of the company; and his own expectations on future development in Shanghai. For instance, he avoided one electrical company whose main product was black and white televisions. He saw this as having limited prospects. He preferred companies which had diversified and become involved in the "craze" (**re** - literally "hot") sectors in contemporary Shanghai such as taxis and restaurants. Similarly, he favoured "concept" shares - these were for companies involved in Pudong construction projects which are still at the "concept" stage but had central government support.

One **dahu** remarked upon the accuracy of Bacon's dictum that "knowledge is power" (**zhishi jiushi liliang**). She commented that initially she had relied upon feelings (**pin ganjue**) when she bought shares. However, after resigning from her **danwei** and devoting all her energies into **chao gupiao** she now used technical analysis (**jishu fenxi**). She proudly showed me a selection of carefully drawn graphs and charts, her own meticulous analysis of market trends. She commented that this kind of analysis is only partial and must be combined with analysis of "the general social situation", including state policy and politics.[67] The main sources of information she used in her "analysis of

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[65]Continuing this analogy he added that "if you choose too many you will not be able to control them!"

[66]"Stock Sheets Banned" FEER 2 June 1994: 63.

[67]Contrast this need to know about key current events to a wealthy business woman I interviewed the same day who told me that she rarely read newspapers or watched the television news.

society" (**shehui fenxi**) were the "media world" (**xinwen meijie**) and personal contacts. The former included newspapers, broadcast media and magazines - she noted that the term **meijie** (intermediary, vehicle, medium) is derived from **mei,** a go-between or matchmaker. Personal contacts appeared to be especially important. She remarked that **dahu,** "small **hu**" and friends who work in newspaper offices often phone her with various items of news. She stressed that the **dahushi** was the best place to hear the latest news and rumours. In her tiny flat there was a stream of visitors and telephone calls. All hinged on the latest news in the share market.

Another **dahu** believed that **dahu** were successful because there was a lot of contact (**lianxi duo**) and discussion amongst them and because they had many sources of information. He added that this information may be incorrect or false but that "even false news may have an effect upon the market." When I asked about rumours of the death of Deng Xiaoping he noted that Deng had already been killed off and revived by the share market seven or eight times. Every day he studied five newspapers and some of the numerous pamphlets devoted to stocks.[68] He explained that he did this because what politicians do and say affects the price of shares. However, he considered the "grapevine" (**xiaodao xiaoxi**) the most rapid source of news followed by broadcast media. Television and the telephone were his main sources of information and he carried both a pager and a mobile phone (**dageda**). The mobile phone was an important symbol of, and means for attaining, success. It was pointed out to me that whilst an employer may buy an employee a pager that a **dageda** was only bought by oneself. The status of the mobile phone is implicit in its Chinese name "big brother big", a term I was told had originally been used in Hong Kong to denote the head of a triad organization.

On one occasion I unwittingly found I had been in possession of potentially valuable information. This occurred when I visited the home of a **dahu** on a day when government policies designed to raise the value of the Renminbi against the US dollar had been announced. This news had been released in Hong Kong before the mainland and reported a couple of days before on the *BBC World Service*. This **dahu** commented that she wished she had known because this revaluation had affected share prices.

Some of Shanghai's **dahu** also belonged to various share salons, where people meet and discuss the share market (see Hertz 1994: 168-71). One salon was reported as

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[68]He told me that he read newspapers such as **Jiefang Ribao** (Liberation Daily) for the "important news" (**da de xinxi**). He explained that **Jiefang Ribao** was the "party newspaper" whilst **Xinmin Wanbao** (New People's Evening News) "the **laobaixing** read".

charging a monthly membership fee of 1,000¥.[69] Salons of this type are a clear indication of a "solidifying" of an economic interest group. However, amongst dealers I met, there was a preference for more informal meetings and social interaction.

That the need to exchange information was not restricted to **dahu** was evident in the rapid proliferation of magazines and news sheets devoted to the stock market. There did not appear to be professional advisors on shares. However, there were adult education classes on shares (see Hertz 1994: 165-8). One dealing centre I visited organized a share market salòn and regularly invited speakers. There were also informal salons - when the exchanges closed at 3pm small groups of people clustered outside their doors discussing shares. Outside at least two especially highly rated exchanges these informal information exchange groups continued their discussions until past midnight even on freezing winter nights. Ellen Hertz (Ibid: 151-8) describes these gatherings as "crowd clusters" and stresses the way that they are comprised of strangers, and the openness of these anonymous crowds which allows participants to enter or leave at will. The only other time I witnessed such "clusters" in Shanghai was during the demonstrations of 1989.

The importance of information was exemplified during an interview which took place in a local government office. Once word got out that there was a **dahu** in the building my interview was soon taken over by an assortment of people who came in and began discussing share prices with him and asking his opinion on various shares and market trends in general. Our conversation took place in the office of the man who had introduced me and he was present throughout. When we were alone again he commented that many of those who had joined the conversation were not supposed to buy shares because of their rank.

6.6 Back To The Future?

The share market has hastened and facilitated a redefinition of the individual's relationship to society. A key aim of promoting the market is to redefine Shanghai's role by developing the city as a national and international financial centre. Since 1992 an increasing number of non-Shanghai companies have been listed on the SSE. In September 1993 the SSE began to transmit real-time stock information via satellite to twelve Chinese cities including Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Haikou and Hefei.[70] These links now cover most

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[69]"**Shanghai Tan de Nu Gumin**" (Female Share Dealers in Shanghai) Dadi Monthly 1993 No. 6: 24.

[70]"Stock News Sent By Satellite" CD 20 September 1993: 2.

of China with some 40-50 million share holders across the country. A SSE spokesperson said the hope is that by the year 2,000 the Shanghai exchange will be ranked with London, New York and Tokyo.[71] Foreign banks and brokerages have begun to return to Shanghai.[72] In June 1994 the Dutch bank *ABN-Amro* became the first foreign bank to return to its pre-revolutionary site at the Peace Hotel on the Bund.[73] Some share dealers I met looked forward to China joining the GATT so they can deal in shares in Hong Kong and Tokyo.

A dealing centre manager told me that over two-thirds of the 300-plus dealing centres in Shanghai are run by non-Shanghai companies. He remarked that many centres are run by young men from out of Shanghai and noted that whilst this was a recent phenomenon it was also a return to the situation which had begun with the Opium War. From this time Shanghai had become an "adventurers' paradise" (**maoxianjia de leyuan**) which attracted people from all over China and the rest of the world to come to do business.

It is interesting to ponder the consequences of Shanghai's redefined role and its reinscription into global financial markets. Despite the developments noted above the SSE was still extremely insular with politburo policies having the most important effect. Even the Shenzhen and Hong Kong markets appeared to have little influence on the SSE. In October 1993 the first takeover bid was made when the Shenzhen *Baoan Company* began buying up shares - flouting exchange regulations in the process - of the Shanghai listed company *Yanzhong*. It is clear from this that new, more complicated systems of ownership and control are developing. In future, will foreign companies be able to take over Chinese listed companies? Re-internationalization also raises questions such as how, without free access to information, can Shanghai traders be successful in a global market? What impact might the integration of China's economy into the world economy have on future economic and political developments?

Further extension of stock-holding and "the market" generally poses many problems. For instance, replacing state directives by the profit motive brings the distinct danger of far higher levels of unemployment, which could be a source of instability. I asked one

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[71]"**Shanghai Gushi Jiakuai Fazhan Sudu**" (Shanghai Share Market Speeds Up its Pace of Development) (SYB 18 January 1993: 1.

[72]Foreign observers expect many Western banks to return to their "old haunts" (see "Bears in a China Shop" The Economist 14 May 1994: 111-2).

[73]"Shanghai: Capital of China's Get-Rich-Quick Capitalism" FEER 23 June 1994: 54-6.

exchange manager about the possibility of bankruptcy in Shanghai. He observed wryly that this was unlikely since "the government still wants 'stability and unity' (**anding tuanjie**) - his own perception of Deng Xiaoping's statement to this effect.

Another interesting area to speculate upon is the share market's role in Shanghai's emergent civil society now that stock-holding is no longer just an experiment and "shares have already formed an indissoluble bond with Shanghainese."[74] It would be tempting to portray some of the attention to politics and economic affairs by share dealers mentioned above as indicative of a nascent civil society. However, it would be a mistake to infer from this an interest in politics as a citizen. The **dahu** mentioned above who daily reads five newspapers told me that he had "no interest" (**bu guanxin**) in politics, describing it as "nothing to do with the **laobaixing**." This attitude was shared by other **dahu** I interviewed.

Despite this it is clear that new interest groups were beginning to coalesce around the share market. At the higher reaches were the share dealing companies themselves - these often have highly complex organizational links and an ambiguous relationship with state departments. Then there were the share dealers who met, exchanged information and may form the "joint naval forces" mentioned above. One article observed that these groups (**tuanti**) are comprised of people with a common will and purpose (**zhitong daohezhe**) - an expression from which the term "comrade" (**tongzhi**) derives.[75] It will be interesting to observe the extent to which emergent interest groups press for recognition of their own interests. A sign of potential problems may be the way that already the government's involvement in the market led some to "curse the state" (**ma guojia**) when share prices fell. The share market has also revealed the weakness of the party-state. Hertz describes a situation in September and October 1992 when the government spent billions of *yuan* attempting to prop up the market. She describes how "[i]nvestors throughout Shanghai had watched while the government repeatedly failed to manipulate the market to suit its needs" (1994: 218).

The further growth, role and impact of the Shanghai share market depends upon many factors. It should, however, be evident from this chapter that this market is both indicative and constitutive of the dramatic pace of change in Shanghai; the share discourse is both evidence of the widening "margins" in Shanghai and has contributed to an

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[74]"**Shanghai Tan de Nu Gumin**" (Female Share Dealers in Shanghai) Dadi Monthly 1993 No. 6: 22.

[75]Ibid: 25

extension and blurring of these contours. The share market contains and is fostering many ambiguities and actual or potential points of tension. In all these respects the share experiment is a fascinating microcosm of the wider project of **gaige kaifang** of which it forms a part. The forces and trends unleashed (or constitute of) **gaige kaifang**, whether those planned by the party-state or those which result from citizens everyday actions are remaking the social landscape of Shanghai. The party-state often takes the blame when problems arise but holding back the "tides" or putting the genie back in its bottle may be beyond its power.

Impressions and Speculations

Ethnography tends to fix in aspic cultural phenomena which are in process, in flux. Research in an urban context highlights the limitations of this anthropological *fiction*. The activity of undertaking ethnographic research in Shanghai, a city where the state promotes policies deliberately designed to produce "some change every year and a great change every three years", problematizes the reduction of diverse activities, everyday situations, and a plurality of voices to the two dimensionality of the written page. A key aspect of this ethnographic account of China's largest city has been to highlight the degree of flux and diversity in this metropolis and to sketch some of the boulders, tides and shifting currents.

China's dominant political figure since 1976, Deng Xiaoping, has described the process of reform in China as **mozhe shitou guohe** - crossing the stream, by feeling the boulders. I have incorporated this term into my thesis title. It has the dual merit of being an apposite and vivid metaphor both of Shanghai's social landscape and the practices of its inhabitants, and for my own practices of research and writing. In this concluding section I first summarize the main findings of this thesis. I then explore further some of the trends which have been traced and conclude by speculating on future developments in Shanghai.

Each chapter may stand alone as a "perspective" on Shanghai, in the sense used by David Parkin with his suggestion of ethnography as analogous to impressionist painting. Each of these perspectives is comprised of a vignette of brush strokes of differing thickness and intensity. Occasionally, I have made light strokes "like a dragonfly skimming the surface of the water" (**qingting dian shui**). At other times I have made broad, sweeping strokes, but always with special attention to the craquelure, the fine details of daily life. Daniel Miller writes that "ethnography...goes beyond the abstract solutions of philosophical or political programmes, to encounter these struggles in the compromised pragmatics of everyday life" (1994: 322). In the shifting sands of "Shanghai beach", I, too, often found that the discourses and practices of people's quotidian existences presented quite different, and frequently mutually contradictory, contours to those of over-arching meta-narratives whether those of Marxist-Leninist Mao Zedong Thought or sociological notions of global homogenization, or the accounts "from a height" of changes in contemporary China presented by economists and political scientists.

My intention is that each perspective should be meaning-full in its own right and provide substantial new and nuanced information on Shanghai and its people. Each of six separate vignettes may then combine, collage-like, to form, a whole greater, perhaps, than the sum of its parts. These perspectives share, of course, the topic of "Shanghai".

However, the selection of themes was not random and there is a submerged logic, an undercurrent, which structures this thesis. These themes are formulated in, but also derived from, *Chapter One* where I sketch a broad "picture" of early 1990s Shanghai as given emphasis in indigenous representations.

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In *Chapter One* I noted informants' descriptions of pre-reform Shanghai and the socio-spatial and watery/irrigation metaphors which permeated discourses on **gaige kaifang**. A predominant view was that pre-**gaige kaifang** Shanghai had been like a woman with bound feet, made into a lame city (**bojiao chengshi**)[1] by the central government's expropriations of the wealth created in the city. The city was portrayed to me as having been "stuck in a frame" and as having "solidified"; lack of change in the city's physical structure was frequently presented as paralleled by and indicative of a similar fixity and immutability in people's daily lives, careers and expectations.

In early 1990s Shanghai, with the opening of the "sluice gate", the contours of the Maoist period had already been, or were in the process of being, reconfigured. Even the most casual visitor to Shanghai could not fail to recognize that there have been "enormous changes in the sights and sounds and tastes of urban life" (Stross 1990: 501). Where politics had once been in command and the hand of the party-state had weighed heavily on the shoulder of each citizen, informants now characterized Shanghai as having a "big society, and a small government" (**da shehui, xiao zhengfu**). As William Jenner notes, for the last half century "the state has wanted its subjects kept in their boxes" (1992: 101) but now "[s]ome of the state's boxes are losing their lids" (102). Much more "space" had evidently opened up for many citizens. However, the lack of investment in the city's infrastructure has saddled both China, and more particularly the residents of Shanghai, with a huge debt. Above all, a dilapidated housing stock and a groaning transport network were "millstones around the neck of the city"[2] and strenuous efforts were being made to "shed" these burdens of the past.

From this first chapter it should be evident that my informants often depicted a social landscape comprised of binary oppositions. These contrasts were generally asserted with a degree of certainty and explicitness which was remarkable in itself, even though in practice the dichotomies were readily modified, shifted, and even, contradicted. Frequent

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[1]This term is used in "**Da Shanghai, Ni Hai Beideqi Zhongguo Ma?**" (Great Shanghai, Can You Still Carry China?) Duzhe Wenzhai 1992 (9): 43.

[2]Ibid: 44.

"sharp-edged" contrasts were drawn between a range of inside (**nei**) and outside (**wai**) dichotomies. Particularly pervasive spatial and territorial contrasts were those made between Chinese and non-Chinese - with overseas Chinese as an intermediate category; between Shanghainese and non-Shanghainese; between urban and rural; between work unit and "society"/home; and between home and "outside". These distinctions, which informants used to describe the world around them, are examined in detail throughout this thesis and the central themes are outlined in this conclusion. In a later section of *Impressions and Speculations* I comment upon a further range of sociological distinctions which have been touched upon only tangentially in this thesis.

When discussing changes in Shanghai, and/or in their own lives, informants frequently had recourse to a number of chronological dichotomies. The main chronological contours they referred to, and which, therefore, suffuse this thesis were: Pre-Opium War/feudalism:post-Opium War, pre-Liberation:after Liberation, pre-**gaige kaifang**/Cultural Revolution:after **gaige kaifang**/now. Informants often contrasted the present to "before" (**yiqian**). Sometimes the "before" referred to was specified, as in the routinely used expressions "before Liberation" (**jiefang yiqian**) and "after Liberation" (**jiefang yihou**). On other occasions the "before" referred to was dependent upon the context. I frequently had to follow up informants' comments which included this term by asking "when was 'before'?".[3] When the Communist Party took power in 1949 it actively sought to draw a clear line between "Old" and "New" China. "Now", and with, it seemed, with the encouragement of the Party, the populace often drew a line between the present and the Maoist past. Fixed expressions that had come into everyday use and which paralleled "before Liberation" and "after Liberation" were "before **gaige kaifang**" and "after **gaige kaifang**". The term **gaige kaifang** appeared to be used in two rather distinct ways. Often informants spoke of **gaige kaifang yihou**, that is, "after **gaige kaifang**" - this depicts **gaige kaifang** as something that had happened in the past, a stream that already been crossed. For instance, a share dealer in his early forties told me that people such as himself could compare pre-**gaige kaifang** to the present since they had "crossed over from that time" (**neige shihou guolai de**). To use a Chinese proverb, the river had been crossed and the bridge demolished (**guohe chaiqiao**) - there was no turning back. Informants would also

[3]"Fixing" when events had occurred could be particularly problematic since grammatical structures to create tenses are much more limited in the Chinese language compared to English. For instance, the verbs rendered as "had/has/have" and "be, was, were, are, is" in English each has only one Chinese equivalent. William Jenner has also commented on the degree to which the Chinese language, unlike English, blurs past and present. He notes that images of history and the present often "coexist timelessly" (1992: 7).

say "**xianzai shi gaige kaifang**" - now is **gaige kaifang.** In this second sense, **gaige kaifang** seems akin to a *zeitgeist* and to have a more processual meaning, as an evolving set of policies and developments of which there may be more or less in the future.

In *Chapter Two* I explored the increasing porosity of Shanghai's boundaries with regard to both intra-national and global flows - of which my own research opportunities were a distinct beneficiary. Before the 1980s China was largely closed to global flows - the various "scapes" described by Arjun Appadurai. The blocking of the *Voice of America* and the BBC *World Service* are indicative of China's "closed door" at that time. Shanghai at that time could be depicted as having been vertically integrated, cellular and relatively closed to both global and intra-national flows. Informants told me that with this "closed door" Shanghai's **laobaixing** "did not know what the outside world was like, for only the higher levels had access to foreign media." The **laobaixing** were depicted as having been "blind" (**mangmu**), unable to see (**kanbujian**) and unable to hear (**tingbujian**) what the "outside" was like. They had a very narrow view and were "looking at the sky from the bottom of a well" (**zuojing guantian**). This pattern has altered significantly since the mid-1980s with Shanghai's (partial) reintegration into the global economy, a greater stress upon horizontal linkages, and extensive global and intra-national flows. The "information landscape" (Wark 1993: 141) of the city has changed dramatically. In contemporary Shanghai, global events intrude on one's daily encounters, and certainly "are not external to what the anthropologist finds before him...they are an ingredient in it" (Geertz 1995: 95).

I examine the consequences of various flows for "Chinese" and "Shanghainese" identities in Shanghai. The conclusions I reach are ambiguous because, I would affirm, the discourse of informants was ambivalent. There is evidence that these flows may help to sustain "Chinese" and "Shanghainese" identities, but also that they may redefine, fracture or deconstruct these imagined communities. I found considerable vitality to identifications by residents as both "Chinese" and as "Shanghainese". Since "ethnic" boundaries of this type are generally of most significance when they are breached, then these identifications may have acquired greater valency in the reform era. Shanghai was regaining its attraction - lost since the 1950s - as a "paradise of adventurers". Once again, migrants flooded into the city from all over China and the rest of the world. A substantial proportion of the Chinese migrants swell the "sizeable, 'second class' of urban citizens without permanent urban household registration status" (Chan 1994: 134). Identification as "Shanghainese" was most conspicuously asserted in contrast to these rural migrants. The dominant view

of my informants could be formulated as Shanghainese:"developed" countries::rural migrants:Shanghai.

With rising regional autonomy, long-term central government expropriations and the post-Mao influx of rural migrants who breached Shanghai's "wall" I had anticipated the beginnings at least of a more overtly political assertion of regional "voices". However, I found little evidence of such an assertion. When I asked informants if there was any conflict between "being Shanghainese" and "being Chinese" such questions were regarded as nonsensical. Appropriate analogies for the relationship between identification as "Chinese" and as "Shanghainese" were derived from the comments of informants. Thus "being Shanghainese" could be described as a "different flavour" of Chineseness. Similarly, in the same way as regional operas differ greatly in style but tend to stick to a range of common basic plots so regional identities contribute to "different meanings of being Chinese" (Siu 1993: 19) - they are variations on a theme. It was perhaps my own presuppositions, coming from a continent fraught with local nationalisms, that I should have expected a greater assertion of Shanghai "nationalism". Even though much of the seed corn exists for an assertive localism there was scant evidence of this happening.

Global mediascapes facilitated by new technologies and allied with China's burgeoning media had begun to provide residents with many "more contemporaries" (Hannerz 1992: 30). Where once there was little alternative to the state's monologic voice and its interpretations of how things were or should be, in contemporary Shanghai there was now a proliferation of alternative images, rationalizations, and explanations. For Shanghainese, who frequently asserted their urban sophistication and superiority, the "others" with whom they tended to identify (or, at least, sought to emulate) were those with wealthy metropolitan lifestyles. As I observe, this cosmopolitan identity to which they aspired (and felt entitled) neglected and failed to include the poor of rural China, hundreds of thousands of whom were visibly and industriously engaged upon building a city which fitted this vision.

Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) rightly argues that electronic media have profound effects on altering the significance of time and space. However, I do not accept his view that electronic media have "homogenized places and experiences" (viii). Homogenization takes place only at the most superficial of levels. Rather, global cultural flow and rising prosperity were increasing the repertoire of possible identities and communities to which Shanghai citizens could belong. Shanghainese residents, like ourselves, now "live in a world of fluid, blurred, overlapping cultural identities" (Jenner 1992: 209). Not only was

the city becoming, it seemed, one vast physical construction site, but also Shanghai's re-internationalization was providing many new (deterritorialized) sites for the construction of identities. Included amongst the new range of "aspirational identities" were various consumer "lifestyles" and youth sub-cultures which could cross-cut with territorial identifications - for instance, with notions of Shanghainese sophistication and style.

Sinologists such as Tom Gold (1993a) and Tu Wei-ming (1991) stress the impact of **gangtai** cultural imports upon the PRC and their role in undermining the Communist Party's attempts at ideological control. Tu Wei-ming describes these imports as having a "transformative potential" (925) and as playing a part in "creatively constructing a new vision of Chineseness" (28). However, I noted something of a differential "take-up" of **gangtai** phenomena; their appeal was much greater to younger informants. Older informants tended to stress the need for the retention of "traditional Chinese values" such as respect for the elderly and moderation in expenditure. Additionally, in this and subsequent chapters I showed that it was not solely **gangtai** products which appealed to Shanghainese - often "Western" products were considered desirable too.

In *Chapter Two* I showed the lack of opposition between identification as "Shanghainese" and concurrent identification as "Chinese". In *Chapter Three*, I provided further strands of complexity to senses of being "Shanghainese" by exploring the differential attribution of qualities and identities which residents made of places and people in, or from, different parts of Shanghai. The persistence and apparent reinforcing of representations of "upper" and "lower" quarters during the Maoist era demonstrates the way in which socio-economic policies of that time often operated to produce consequences in direct opposition to the ideals espoused.

In *Chapter Three* I also investigated aspects of the rapidly altering cityscape of Shanghai. Many physical boundaries were being dismantled or transformed and new "walls" created. I concentrated upon trends by which **danwei** lost their all-encompassing functions, and became less enclosed and bounded. Concurrently homes became increasingly privatized and cloissonéed. Under the Maoist model, workers were clustered in all-encompassing work units, often inside walled compounds. The ideal was for such units to be cellular, functionally autarkic and answerable to superiors in a vertically ordered structure of command which reached, ultimately, to a government department in Beijing. In the reform era, these vertical links have been loosened and each **danwei** encouraged to finance its own running costs. To achieve this, many units have turned their component service segments "inside out": that is, they turn their activities into outward facing

commercial entities. Processes within **danwei** were often paralleled by the rupture and reconfiguration of their physical boundaries. The cityscape was being directly altered by the logic of commercialism as **danwei** physically opened their perimeter walls onto the street.

Home styles were also changing - in ways which were often a mirror image of the trends affecting work units. A combination of factors including the impact of past political campaigns, the rehousing and relocation of residents in high-rise housing, a fear of rising crime (often blamed on rural migrants), and the spread of new technologies such as television, video-players and air-conditioning were all increasing the home's separateness and closure from the world outside. Alongside changes at home and work I also noted the proliferation and diversification of leisure activities which provided alternative sites and whose vitality and variety "is an important indication of how far the state's 'indifference zone' has extended" (Wang 1995: 165). However, in leisure pursuits, as in many other aspects of life in early 1990s Shanghai, access and opportunities to these sites often depended very largely upon one's ability to pay or status.

In the final section of *Chapter Three* I suggested ways in which communication technologies may be regarded as indicative of social status. A term which Chinese newspapers used, for instance, was "mobile phone stratum" - those with cellular phones were perceived to be quite distinct from those enclosed within the cellular walls of **danwei**. The mobile phone owner was marked out as a successful person. At the same time a mobile phone provided access to opportunities denied to those with inadequate, immobile communications facilities. This is an instance of the way, in contemporary society, consumption of products can be used to ascribe identities. Such instances also demonstrate how electronic media can both facilitate "connections" but also create new boundaries and types of exclusion.

In *Chapter Four* I explored representations of interpersonal relations and especially trust in other persons, in self and abstract systems. Trust was shown to have been affected by diverse political, cultural and other socio-economic factors. A clear finding is the extent to which informants felt that the state had affected human relations in China. In the case of kinship, for instance, it appears that political pressures, economic imperatives and cultural preferences conjoined to maintain dependence upon, and trust in, close kin. Despite this, current trends, especially an increasingly elderly population and the one child policy, will make individuals more reliant upon abstract systems in the form of pensions and social insurance.

I found some evidence of what Anthony Giddens phrases the "transformation of intimacy". There was clearly an increasing emphasis upon romance and sexual intimacy as indicated by numerous magazine articles, books and radio phone-ins on these topics. However, cultural and material imperatives could outweigh, or at least impinge upon, "emotional" factors. In mate selection, for instance, marriage was viewed by most as a cultural and economic imperative. Moreover, possession of appropriate household registration and access to housing were fundamental requirements for a couple considering marriage.

In this chapter I also examined indigenous notions of "friendship". Giddens suggests that this personalized relationship of trust will increase in importance in conditions of modernity. However, I outlined how, in Shanghai, the English term "friend" encompassed a range of relationships from the highly instrumental to those resembling "pure relationships". Beyond deconstructing a simplistic notion of "friendship" as a single category, I also demonstrated ways in which actions by the state had affected these human relations.

Giddens also posits an increasing focus upon abstract systems as loci for trust. The project to propagate comradeship can be construed as an attempt to popularize an abstract system. In Shanghai, I found little trust in the abstract systems of comradeship, the Communist Party or socialism. An array of factors lay behind the loss of trust in these systems. However, from my informants' comments the key factors imbricated in this lack of trust were maladministration by the Party and a loss of faith in the party-state as an economic manager - this latter perception fuelled by images flowing through the "open door" which showed living standards elsewhere as much higher than citizens had previously been told. Loss of trust in the Communist Party and socialism as expert systems had been replaced by cynicism, a profound pragmatism and "this-worldliness". However, I also found trust in historical and economic laws (**guilu**) and (the inevitability of) "progress" - notions which were highly reminiscent of positivist type approaches and which accorded with Marxist type world views. I also noted a marked tendency toward trust in the "market".

I also found an increasing trust in the self, although there appeared to be distinct generational differences in attitudes and values. Many young people asserted an increasing trust in the self whilst elderly informants tended to express nostalgia for the ideal of selfless comradeship. Informants noted a general shift from collective (**jiti**) towards more individualistic (**gerenhua**) activities and a greater stress upon the self. A frequent comment

was that during Mao Zedong's time people had no mind (**tounao**) and little or no sense of self (**ziwo**). With the complex collective amnesia which surrounds much of the Maoist past it is difficult to know how to understand the collective denial of agency which accompanied it. Perhaps the strongest assertion of this disavowal of agency came from the woman in her mid-twenties who told me that "previously everybody had a single point of view allocated by the state, now we have our own."

In this chapter I also showed how Simmel's (1990) insights on the impact of a monetized economy provide a useful means of understanding events in contemporary Shanghai. Simmel's comments on the liberating effects of a money economy were echoed by informants' description of the reform process - with its attendant monetization of the economy - as China's second "liberation" (**jiefang**).[4] However, increased monetization in Shanghai had also been accompanied by an inflation of wants. For instance, young couples may have become more dependent on their parents to meet the rising costs of marriage gifts and ceremonies. Simmel also highlights the sense of alienation and loss of values which accompany this liberation. In the case of Shanghai, there was plenty of evidence to support these insights of Simmel, although much disaffection appeared to be a legacy of the Maoist period.

In *Chapter Five* I explored various notions surrounding consumption in Shanghai. In some detail I explored the way terminology from the literal consumption of food served, through metaphors and analogies, to describe many aspects of life in Shanghai. A particularly interesting aspect of this were the depictions of the state as a consumer of Shanghai's wealth and of individuals consumption of the state or the **laobaixing**'s wealth. The ideal propagated during the Maoist period was for **danwei** to be "iron rice bowls". By 1992-94, this notion conveyed a sense of dependency and idleness. Moreover, it was felt with **gaige kaifang** that many people had refined the ability to consume and parasitically live off the state.

Further I stressed the ways in which consumption in Shanghai was producing, facilitating and marking out new divisions in society. Shanghai's re-internationalization provided local people with many alternative images and products from which to fashion identities. The inflow of media images and products from exotic elsewheres spurred aspirational identities, identities which were asserted or recognized through the consumption

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[4]It is interesting to bear in mind comments made by Anita Chan. Chan records that in researching a book on the Cultural Revolution "again and again people remembered having felt that same heady sense of 'liberation' in 1966-7 when they had first joined colleagues in casting free from subservience to their work-unit leadership" (1991: 126).

of products. I showed that this "influx does not enter into a vacuum...but enters into various kinds of interaction with already existing meanings and meaningful forms" (Hannerz 1992: 262). In Shanghai, for instance, imported cultural festivals such as Christmas were becoming important but with quite distinctive "Shanghainese characteristics".

Other cultural imports were similarly understood in "Chinese" local contexts and subject to subtle redefinitions. For instance, the imported notion "democracy" had great appeal to some informants. However, I would agree with Anita Chan's view that "democracy" in China, like "freedom", often meant paramountly "freedom from all the petty restrictions that were daily imposed" (1991: 126). In other instances imported cultural products could facilitate the development of deterritorialized consumer identities. However, such identities could also contribute to and cross-cut with notions of Shanghainese cosmopolitanism and sophistication.

A "dramatic revolution of rising expectations" (Goodman 1991: 15) was most obvious among young people; unlike their parents they took the benefits brought by **gaige kaifang** for granted and expected much more in the future. Some actively sought to be able to enjoy high class consumption, their desires fuelled by media images and advertising. Young people were both forced and encouraged to "look towards money" (**wang qian kan** - a homonym of "look to the future") not least as the security once provided by state **danwei** was being eroded, and the general expectation was that this process would continue. The need and desire to make money in Shanghai's newly commercializing economy induced some to take risks and in the scramble for money fraud, theft and counterfeiting were increasingly common.

In *Chapter Six* I outlined the emergent discourse on stocks and shares in Shanghai. If the recently completed Shanghai Radio and Television Tower is a physical icon of change and "set to become a new symbol of Shanghai"[5] then the stock market is a parallel institutional icon. The share discourse provides a microcosm of the forces and trends unleashed by **gaige kaifang** including inflated expectations, hopes, dangers, risks and unpredictability. The share market has hastened and facilitated a redefinition of the individual's relationship to society, contributed to "widening the margins", and to the rapid social differentiation in the city. The Shanghai share market has played a significant role in the creation of a substantial number of *nouveaux riches* and, thereby, has contributed to and fuelled the sense of injustice many Shanghainese felt over rising wealth

[5]CD 15 November 1993: 5. The 460 metre high television tower, nicknamed the "Oriental Pearl", is in Pudong, directly across the Huangpu River from (and a symbolic retort to?) the colonial built Bund.

inequalities.

Sinologists have recently focused upon the emergence of "civil society" in China (e.g. see Chamberlain 1993, White 1993: 198-232, Whyte 1992). Gordon White, for instance, sees "tendencies" towards civil society (230) and discerns "the shoots of an incipient 'civil society'" (199). The share market encouraged and provided an environment for civil society to emerge. Access to information was vital for traders and various formal and many more informal interest groups had already begun to coalesce around the share market. It will be interesting to observe the extent to which emergent interest groups press for recognition of their own interests.

The SSE also raises issues concerning Shanghai's place in the global economy. A satellite net already links the SSE to punters across China and the intention is that this currently very insular market will play a part in the city's reintegration into global financial markets. Foreign banks and brokerages have begun to return to Shanghai and China is actively seeking membership of the World Trade Organization. These developments and China's reinscription into global financial markets will raise many issues over political and economic control.

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It does not seem too far-fetched to draw a parallel between Shanghai's changing status and that of changing family structures in the city. Pre-reform Shanghai was like a "traditional" daughter-in-law thrust into an arranged marriage, bound to a previously unseen groom, at the mercy of a tyrannical mother-in-law. The body of Shanghai was penetrated by the patriarch, her dowry used up, and her former good looks withered. With atrophying bound feet, and scarcely able to stand, this daughter-in-law was expected and commanded both to "stand erect on two legs" and to "hold up half the sky".

By the time the old Patriarch died, outlived by his now emaciated bride, family life had already begun to change. The "modern" woman marries whom she chooses, goes out to work, and is an equal (at least) of her husband. Shanghainese men were often described as suffering from the disease **qiguanyan** - "tracheitis". A homonymy of this term is "the wife controls strictly". In Shanghai men shop, knit, look after babies, and their incomes are controlled by their wives. They only enjoy sexual favours if they "kneel beside the bed" (**chuangtou gui** - a pun on "bedside cupboard"). The situation of the modern daughter-in-law is quite different in relation to the mother-in-law. The "traditional" stereotype of the subservient, exploited daughter-in-law has largely been replaced with one where it is the mother-in-law who is exploited. If Shanghai is construed as a newly

assertive daughter-in-law it is interesting to recall, and ponder upon, Olga Lang's description of the situation of mothers-in-law with such daughters. Lang's assessment on the basis of research carried out in 1930s Shanghai was that "[t]he fate of these old women with modern daughters-in-law is tragic indeed" (1946: 237).

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In addition, to the inside:outside spatial dichotomies and the before:after chronological dichotomies mentioned above, informants also made a series of contrasts between various sociological inside:outside categories. During the Maoist period the following categories appear to have predominated: Party members:non-Party members, the "people"/good classes:enemies of the people/bad classes - with intellectuals as an intermediary or "floating" category, state/collective:private. I examine ways in which these categories have been blurred and new contours have been emerging.

The Party/non-Party distinction was portrayed as of great importance during the Maoist period. Party members were extolled as "special material" and moral exemplars. To be "in" the Party was a mark of social approval. During 1992-4 the Party member/non-Party member distinction appeared to be of limited importance with regard to low-ranking cadres. Informants told me that generally they no longer felt any need to exercise caution in their conversations when low-level Party members were present. Despite this, the latter continued to receive some extra benefits, and a common complaint was that **danwei** cadres had better access to housing. Informants drew a much clearer distinction between themselves and high-ranking Party officials. The latter were described as a stratum or, more controversially, a *class* with special power (**tequan jieceng/jieji**) quite distinct from ordinary people (**laobaixing** or **shimin**).[6] Any notion that Party members "served the people" had, it appeared, long since evaporated. Joining the Communist Party was overwhelmingly viewed by my informants as a route to career advancement - Party officials served themselves and their families first. Although **gaige kaifang** has opened up many more "routes" to success, Party membership remained the sole route to political power. Additionally, the distinction between merchant and bureaucrat had blurred (cf. Solinger 1992). A popular view was that this blurring involved considerable unfairness and, often, corruption. As an observer in Shanghai during Spring 1989, I gauge that official corruption (**guandao**) was *the* main focus of protesters' anger.

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[6]This distinction persisted beyond retirement with retired people classed as **tuixiu** or **lixiu.** Ordinary people **tuixiu** whilst cadres **lixiu** and receive higher pensions, living space allowances, and welfare entitlements.

Since the late 1970s the Party has ceased using class labels and has no longer used the rhetoric of "class struggle" in which "the people" were sharply distinguished from "the enemies of the people". This latter category included, for example, former capitalists and landlords. The only time I heard language of this type used was by politically dissatisfied individuals who described, with acerbic irony, the CCP as the "enemy of the people".

During much of the Maoist period there appears to have been little official acceptance of *any* notion of a positive "private" domain. From the mid-1950s until the late 1970s, official rhetoric generally condemned private enterprise as morally bad. Even between the two "good" types of enterprise - collective and state - a distinct hierarchy was maintained. The highest prestige was accorded to state work units which could provide the full range of socialist style benefits. During the reform era the former distinctions between state/collective and private enterprise blurred. For instance, officially it became easier to move from collective to state **danwei** and private enterprises are now permitted. In addition, new forms of enterprise have been established such as share-issuing companies and arrangements whereby state or collective enterprises are contracted-out to business people. There has also been a reintroduction of various forms of foreign-funded ventures and proliferation of brokers - including latter day "compradors" - who operate along the interstices of these entities.

A distinction which appeared to be of growing significance was that between young and old. Significantly, an imported term - **daigou** - was used to described this widening gulf. Those under the age of about forty or so spoke a quite different language to those socialized in the Maoist period with its rhetoric of "class struggle". Amongst young Shanghainese I met the "insistency, repetitiveness, and monotony of Chinese [state] propaganda" (Nathan 1986: 172) had no appeal at all. Their most frequent reaction to this "thin discourse of control" (Weller 1994: 206) was boredom, and, occasionally, disgust. Increasingly government propagandists could only get their message across by competing in the cultural market place. In competition with the lure of the widely available **gangtai** popular songs, disco-dancing, karaoke, romantic novels, kung-fu fiction and melodramatic soap operas the CCPs univocal "drone" had no chance, not least because many informants assumed that Party officials had, themselves, long since ceased to believe their own rhetoric.

Another significant contour which appeared to be solidifying was an increasing assertion of self and the rhetoric of individualism. The depoliticization of everyday life played a part in this. During the Maoist era political education and the communal activities

it involved were designed to promote a sense of common purpose and to link each citizen to the party-state. In the reform era these activities - which had in any case become subject to considerable cynicism - diminished both in scale and intensity. At the same time, trends such as work units becoming less inclusive and for a labour market to develop place the onus on individuals to make decisions and pursue their own goals.

The emerging "socialist market economy" undoubtedly makes greater demands on citizens, especially the young - they find their own jobs, may change employment and have greater opportunities to travel. The increased emphasis upon the self was evident, for example, in the promotion of fashion and cosmetics and by the way leisure pursuits increasingly cater to individual tastes. The rising divorce rate was further evidence of a stress upon individual desires and a search for self-fulfilment. The age cohort sent down to the countryside appears to have been pivotal in this shift. Nearly two decades later many still felt a sense of betrayal but also that this experience, far from their families, dependent upon their own resources and often in harsh conditions, had been a tempering (**duanlian**) through which they had learnt to rely upon their own abilities.

It seems reasonable to assume that the expressed belief in the self will become even more pronounced once the one-child generation reaches maturity. Already amongst the current generation of teenagers almost none has a brother or a sister and many have grown up not only with the undivided and close attention of two parents but also two sets of grandparents - the so-called "1-2-4 syndrome". It will be intriguing to observe the sociological and psychological contours which emerge as this uniquely cossetted cohort reaches maturity.

Two particularly striking and emotionally charged categories which were brought to my attention in daily conversations were those between **laobaixing** and non-**laobaixing** and between poor and rich. During 1992-4 the newly re-emergent differentiation between rich and poor was a fault line which seemed daily to widen. This distinction overlapped with that between **laobaixing**/non-**laobaixing**. A common way to depict wealth inequalities was as a contrast between those with "ways" or "roads" (**you banfa/lu de ren**), including those who took "crooked roads" (**wai luzi**), and those without "ways" or "roads" (**meiyou banfa/lu de**). High Party members were amongst those with "ways" and "roads" since their official posts gave them contacts and the power to allocate resources. Private entrepreneurs (**getihu**) were also routinely cited as wealthy. However, although this was the dominant (expressed) view, a "sub-text" sometimes appeared; if questioned further on this topic informants often acknowledged that many **getihu** were also poor. The rich:poor

divide was often portrayed in terms of consumption styles. For instance, the wealthy were those who ate the best food, were car owners or in a mobile phone-owning "stratum".

The category of **laobaixing** was one which many of my informants used. Its components are reminiscent of John Fiske's comments on "the people" which he describes as a "shifting set of social allegiances, which are described better in terms of people's felt collectivity than in terms of external sociological factors such as class, gender, age, race, region, or what have you. Such allegiances may coincide with class and other social categories, but they don't necessarily: they can often cut across these categories, or often ignore them" (1989: 24). The **laobaixing** were discursively present in thousands of comments. Typically the **laobaixing** were personified in remarks such as: "in 1949 the Shanghai **laobaixing** welcomed the Communist Party", "the **laobaixing** are honest and hard working", "the **laobaixing** would not accept great inequalities of wealth", and "the **laobaixing** are made angry by official corruption".

With the exception of high Party members - who were always excluded - membership of the category **laobaixing** was contested. Many of my informants excluded private entrepreneurs (**getihu**) from the category because they were considered to be rich and also morally suspect. For their part, **getihu** I met were keen to assert that they were **laobaixing**. Intellectuals inclusion as **laobaixing** was rather ambivalent. Those I asked directly would tell me that they were **laobaixing**. However, in their conversations these same individuals would differentiate themselves from **laobaixing** and from "ordinary people" (**putongren**). For instance, they would describe **laobaixing** as being "without **wenhua**", a definition which, logically, would exclude themselves from being **laobaixing**.

The term **laobaixing** (literally "old one hundred names") was so common and seemingly innocuous it would be easy to ignore it. Early in my research when I asked one elderly man to explain who the **laobaixing** were, he summed up his exposition with the statement that "the **laobaixing** are always the victims." However, as has been shown in the previous chapters and as I show in examples given above, the **laobaixing** could also be represented in other ways. They were a long-suffering mass ("the masses") and could indeed be victims. Being **laoshi** - a term which means "honest" but also conveys a sense of naivety, even gullibility - they were potential victims of slick fraudsters or a pathological emperor. However, they could not, as in Abraham Lincoln's dictum, all be fooled for all of the time. In a term favoured, for quite different motives, by both Orientalists and many of my informants there would come a time when they would wake-up (**xingguolai**). As such, risen from their slumbers, they were a force to be reckoned with. Imbued with an

innate sense of right and wrong, capable of multiple resistances, they could thwart the ambitions of false prophets (or those who accrued undeserved profits).

Analysts who have examined the potential for "civil society" in China, and my own findings in *Chapter Four* indicate, as yet, a lack of institutional bases of sociality. In part this is because the party-state actively seeks to prevent the growth of, and to eradicate the shoots of, any form of organization which could threaten its own place. Additionally, the lack of trust between strangers, between those who do not "know" each other, seems likely to exercise a powerful constraint on the development of associations. As Chamberlain comments "Chinese civil society seems not so clearly in evidence. Individual and parochial interests typically take precedence over the common good" (1993: 210-1). However, in the same way as Chamberlain suggests that Sinologists have wrongly focused their attention on intellectual elites and that, for instance, sites such as the industrial workplace may be more fruitful, so it may be that the nebulous category "**laobaixing**" requires further attention.

As I note, the **laobaixing** were often personified. Statements made on behalf of "the **laobaixing**" would invariably make perfectly good sense if the speaker used "I" in its place. The displacement of what were, presumably, the speakers' own views and feelings (and their potential agency?) onto this category is not surprising. Traditional Chinese philosophy has tended to stress the collective good. Moreover, open personal statements of defiance have been dangerous at many times in Chinese history - a traditional proverb states: **ren pa chuming zhu pa zhuang** - fame portends trouble for men just as fattening does for pigs. From a more positive perspective, however, the ways in which the term **laobaixing** was used does seem to indicate a moral economy of sorts, involving a sense of shared feeling, of collectivity, of the potentiality for forms of association that cross-cut everyday boundaries.

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A theme of this thesis has been to show ways in which identities in Shanghai are (increasingly) contingent and contextual, there being a wide range of cross-cutting, possible identifications.[7] Douglas Kellner describes identities in "traditional" societies as un-

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[7]My own identities in Shanghai as "foreign" and "English" are an obvious instance of this. Both of these identities were "imagined" on my behalf by people I encountered; they formed a base-line, a reference point, against which my own presentation of self was compared, discussed and evaluated. In London, "being English" is usually a non-discursive, dormant identification. In Shanghai, by contrast, I was daily made aware of "being English" as others constantly referred to it. When I listened to Shanghainese residents depictions of Englishness, they generally bore so little relation to my own understandings of this category that I felt myself, by turns, a voyeur, an imposter and a trespasser on people's fondly held stereotypes.

problematic, as a "function of predefined social roles" (1992: 141). With "modernity", Kellner considers that "identity becomes more mobile, multiple, personal, self-reflexive, and subject to change and innovation" (ibid). Kellner also contrasts "modern" and "postmodern" identities. He writes that "[w]hile the locus of modern identity revolved around one's occupation, one's function in the public sphere (or family), postmodern identity revolves around leisure, centred on looks, images, and consumption" (153). It is interesting to ask, according to these formulations, whether Shanghai is "traditional", "modern" or "postmodern"? Initially, however, I would say that I find Kellner's distinction between traditional and modern identities problematic since family roles, are, presumably, largely "predefined social roles". I would argue that a combination of these two appellations accords closely with the situation in pre-**gaige kaifang** Shanghai. For much of the Maoist era people were stuck with ascribed, and largely immutable, class labels, jobs they had probably not chosen, and egalitarian levels of consumption were strongly encouraged and, at times, enforced. The growth of advertising, media images, and the stress upon consumption which have been so marked in the reform era have all provided material from which to fashion a range of "postmodern" identities. Already, by 1985, Robert Weller found that the availability of proliferating styles of clothing and personal decoration had "opened up an enormous new range for the expression of new kinds of identity" (1994: 215). However, the degree to which individuals were both able to and wished to "buy" into such identities differed enormously. Additionally, for many of my informants, their main preoccupations were their "traditional" family roles as grandparents, parents, daughters or sons and as friends. These identities were, themselves, being influenced and subtly redefined by proliferating media narratives which explained, for instance, how to be a better mother or a more filial son.

Ulf Hannerz writes that "postmodern culture is characterized by a multiplicity of perspectives and voices. It is a thing of shreds and patches. Juxtaposition becomes the prevalent experience" (1992: 34). With its increasing degree of "imported cultural heterogeneity" (Ibid: 201) and "availability of cultural interfaces" (203), one may describe contemporary Shanghai as increasingly postmodern. However, like David Parkin (1993: 85-6), I am sceptical of those who consider global cultural flow as primarily a contemporary phenomenon. Thus, when compared to accounts of the city in the 1930s, early 1990s Shanghai was still a rather insular place. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a place of *more* juxtapositions and *more* cultural heterogeneity than inter-war Shanghai with its Qing dynasty wooden houses, art deco experiments, classical style public buildings, mock

Tudor style cottages, and the assemblages of migrants from all over China, White Russians, prostitutes, missionaries, Jewish refugees, "underground" Communist activists, British "Shanghailanders", Sikh and Annamese policemen, and Japanese soldiers.

Along with the need to interrogate ethnocentric biases it seems that anthropologists also need to be alert to what may be called a chrono-centrism: that is, the notion that *all* contemporary phenomena are unique. What does appear to be unique in the late twentieth century is the ease and sheer speed with which cultural phenomena may now ricochet back and forth across the planet. The impact of electronic media has been a significant theme of this thesis. Their impact, like so many of the findings of this thesis, has been multi-faceted and ambiguous.

Comments made by the human rights activist Harry Wu (1995) during a lecture delivered at London University's *School of Oriental and African Studies* were illuminating on this account. Wu described how he had been arrested as he tried to cross into China from Kazakhstan a few weeks before. In his estimation, his arrest at this remote border post could be attributed to the successes of **gaige kaifang** which had brought in funds for China's Public Security Bureau, thereby allowing them to computerise their activities. He was caught in this new electronic web. This example demonstrates the ambiguity of electronic media - it would be mistaken to focus only upon and to overemphasize their "de-territorializing" effects. Such devices may be "technologies without boundaries" (cf. Noam 1990) but they can also facilitate vastly improved means of surveillance and control and seal boundaries much more effectively. Wu, for instance, had intended to use micro-cameras to film secret labour camps, places hidden in "dark corners". The aim of Harry Wu whose current career and activities could be described as consisting of and embodying a "global positive feedback loop" (Wark 1993: 140) was to show these images on the Western media and thereby bring pressure to bear on both the American and Chinese governments. As he discovered, electronic media can contemporaneously illuminate China's interstitial places and close gaps in the "wall".

A Chinese one *yuan* note...

In Shanghai, as elsewhere in the world, electronic messages "steal into places like thieves in the night" (Meyrowitz 1985: 117). However, the Chinese state is busily ensuring that these "thieves" are kept out or, at least, do not steal anything of value. In Shanghai it appears that the government has recently engaged upon a large-scale project to install a cable system. The motive appears to be to preempt citizens acquiring satellite dishes which are less susceptible to state controls. Cable systems have the great advantage that they can be more readily filtered and, if need be, cut off. Similarly, recent reports describe how "China has laid the foundations of an electronic Great Wall to fend off invaders on the information superhighway."[8] A Hong Kong-based subsidiary of China's **Xinhua** News Agency is said to be "testing a politically correct version of the Internet. Purged of pornography, political dissent and other forms of 'spiritual pollution'."[9] A cartoon in the Financial Times refers to this China Internet as "a kind of information superhighway without the information".[10] Nonetheless, the former of these articles adds that "this new barrier is already in danger of being overrun. In June, its defences lowered by the profit motive, China allowed citizens of Beijing and Shanghai to buy time on the real Internet." With some 40,000 Internet users already, and a 30% annual growth in computer ownership, this article sees an "unstoppable momentum" towards China's integration into global information flows.

A further postmodern characteristic mentioned by Hannerz is the way in which the "past is raided for commoditizable nostalgia" (35). Compared to pre-**gaige kaifang** Shanghai there does seem to be evidence of this. For instance, CDs and karaoke tapes of "revolutionary" songs were extremely popular and I watched a Japanese car company's advertisement on *Shanghai Oriental Television* which showed black and white footage of workers at the "model" Daqing oil-field. The slogans of this advert deliberately mimicked the style of Chinese government propaganda slogans. These were certainly evidence of commoditizable nostalgias yet were not those pre-war classical and Tudor style buildings similarly marketable nostalgias?

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[8]"China Tries To Shut Out Internet Anarchy" The Guardian 4 September 1995: 9.

[9]Ibid.

[10]"Net For China: No Smut, No Politics, No Decadent Culture" FT 10 July 1995: 13.

China matters because it was until 1850 the world's largest economic power... It has gone through a period of 150 years of hard times but it is reasonable to assume that within our lifetime this will once again be the world's largest economy, the world's, perhaps, most powerful state, certainly the most dominant state in the most economically booming economic area of the world, in East Asia. Therefore, it matters economically... strategically...and in terms of spreading its culture and values.

Gerald Segal (1996)[11]

Viewed as a place of trade, I fear that Hong Kong will be a failure.

Robert Fortune (1853, Vol. 1: 13)

If China is "crossing the stream" one is tempted to ask what lies on the other side? The long-term consequences of the far-reaching socio-economic changes now in motion in Shanghai can only be guessed at. Shanghai society displayed all the volatility and unpredictability of the city's stock market. The only certainty over China's political future is its uncertainty. As Robert Fortune's words show (and his assessment was shared by many contemporaries) China "experts" have often been proved spectacularly wrong.

In speculating on the future contours of Shanghai it is interesting to compare the following two comments. The first, on urban China in general, states that "[a] sense of the incompleteness of change emerged strongly...from all the essays in this volume". The second, on Shanghai in particular, states that "[o]ld things are passing away and the new order is not yet firmly established." These remarkably similar assessments are separated by almost eighty years, the first from Barry Naughton's (1995a: 26) introductory comments to Davis *et al*'s Urban Spaces in Contemporary China; the second quote is Mary Gamewell's conclusion to her book The Gateway to China: Pictures of Shanghai published in 1916. It seems that while the present *always* consists of flux and indeterminacy that certainty and clarity are *always* just around the corner, in a mythological future which is constantly deferred. I deliberately avoided calling this chapter a conclusion for just this reason.

In the United Kingdom political imperatives often limit future planning to no more than a couple of years ahead. In Shanghai it was striking to hear so many media reports on plans for the twenty first century, often for projects which are only expected to reach their full fruition in, perhaps, one hundred years time. When I asked an elderly informant, born a citizen of the Qing empire, how he envisaged Shanghai's future he mentioned the plans which are being made. Then he remarked that during the Cultural Revolution one could never have imagined Shanghai would be the way it is now. So, he added, "the decades ahead may be equally beyond our imaginations..."

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[11] "Asia Gold" *BBC Radio 4*. Broadcast January 4, 1996.

When Deng Xiaoping spoke of China "crossing the stream" he envisioned that what lay on the other bank would be a rich, powerful nation state, with the Communist Party firmly in control. Continued social stability and the Communist Party's legitimacy now appears dependent upon continued rising living standards for the majority of the population. There appear to be good grounds for the fulfilment of Deng's prophecy and to support the comments of Gerald Segal. During the 1980s China's GNP is reported to have doubled. China's President, Jiang Zemin, recently reiterated that the aim for the 1990s is another doubling of GNP.[12] Shanghai's economic growth is expected to exceed this already impressive rate and it is certainly one of those "Chinese coastal cities and towns [which] today look more like Asian boom cities with the familiar vibrancy of bustling private businesses and street vendors, and problems ranging from pollution to prostitution" (Chan 1994: 98). Moreover, my informants were mostly optimistic, believing in a bright prosperous and glorious (**guangming**) future for the city. There seems every reason to expect that the "truly momentous" changes underway in China will effect not only the way of life of most Chinese people but also "create a totally different dimension in the future global political economy" (Chan 1994: 154).

The description of Shanghai as a "paradise of adventurers" seems to have been subject to shifting meanings. This appellation was, perhaps, derived from the title of G.E. Miller's (1937) novel Shanghai, The Paradise of Adventurers. A **Jingji Zhoubao** (Economic Weekly) article of August 25, 1949 described Shanghai as "a non-productive city...a parasitic city...a criminal city... It is the paradise of adventurers...a city where waste is even greater than consumption" (cited in Gaulton 1981: 46). During 1992-4 I occasionally heard people use this term. However, it now seemed to express a positive nostalgia for a lost past or a hope for the future. Even the official media seem to support the notion of the desirability of Shanghai once again becoming more like it once was. A front page Shanghai Star report on a meeting orchestrated by Shanghai's then mayor, Huang Ju, on the topic of the future of Shanghai described it as part of the "the city government's efforts to revive the past glories of Shanghai."[13]

As I made clear in the Introduction, those for whom **gaige kaifang** had brought the fewest benefits and, above all, those whose livelihoods had been undermined, were the most reluctant to speak with a foreign researcher. However, even amongst the majority of my

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[12]SWB FE/2357/G/3. 17 July 1995.

[13]"City of Future" 2 July 1993.

informants who believed their living standards to be improving I found many simmering discontents and resentments. For some of my informants Shanghai was a city in which there was change with each passing day (**ri xin yue yi**), a development they responded to positively. However, there were others for whom there was little or no change, or for whom change was unwelcome. For instance, a state **danwei** worker in her late twenties complained to me that:

> Most of the benefits and profit (**liyi**) from **gaige kaifang** goes to foreigners whilst many problems, such as pollution, are left behind for the **laobaixing**. It increases the weight of Chinese people's burden (**jiazhong Zhongguoren de fudan**). The space (**kongjian**) of Shanghai is increasingly bad/poor (**cha**). There is no fresh air, no clean water. Everything is done for short term benefit, for money. People are alienated by material goods, people serve money (**ren bei wu yihua, ren wei qian fuwu**). It used to be very quiet where I live [a compound owned by the army], now the roads around here are all being dug up and in disarray, there is rubble, holes, dirt and machinery everywhere.

Distinct patterns, which may create serious tensions in the future, had already begun to distil into visible contours. Issues which caused particular concern and which constituted fierce undercurrents of indignation, included rising inequalities of wealth, corruption by officials and crime - the latter often blamed upon migrant workers, "outsiders". These phenomena were already making Shanghai a less ordered, a less safe place. Deeper undercurrents of discontent included past mistreatment or a sense of a youth "lost" in the countryside. These concerns may not produce serious unrest provided that living standards of the majority continue to improve. However, real dangers will lie ahead if this growth is not sustained. Additionally, a potentially dangerous feature of the reform era has been the raising of expectations and aspirations. Great dangers lie in store if they cannot be met. The future of the Communist Party would appear to be largely entwined with the provision of constantly rising living standards - Deng Xiaoping has held out the promise of a "comfortable living standard" for all Shanghai citizens by the end of this decade. Expectations were often extremely high, and many of my informants considered Hong Kong and Singapore not only as models to emulate but to be surpassed. At present this objective appears attainable, incomes generally are higher and the range and quality of consumer products is increasing.

A strong consensus of my informants was that the sluice gate which had been opened could not be closed again. Nethertheless concerns were expressed over the near to mid-term future. In some respects this matched the situation in Hong Kong over which "has always hung a threatening cloud of insecurity" (Baker 1983: 478). A commonly expressed fear was that in the event of economic recession and/or political instability these

fractures and fissures will widen and become the courses along which frustrations and discontent flow.

It is interesting to speculate on where future protesters will look for inspiration in future protests. Western observers tend to consider greater democracy and political freedom as solutions to these problems. Although in Spring 1989 protesters tended to look to Western cultural symbols this need not necessarily be the case in the future. Western analysts' preoccupation with "democracy" in China tends to overlook the quite different cultural background in China. The dominant view amongst my informants was that Communist Party rhetoric on, for example, controlling crime and corruption was correct. Although a number of informants considered the Party too entangled in these activities to control them a more usual comment was that it had become *too* weak, *too* lacking in authority to control them. Similarly it was widely believed that the party-state was losing its ability to collect tax, to control the influx of rural migrants, to control pornography, or even to provide free health and education. The party-state's weakness was believed, largely, to have been a product of **gaige kaifang** and its attendant dilution of Communist Party power. For most of my informants, press freedom and parliamentary democracy were not the solution. Rather, the Confucian ideal of an honest, upright official **(qingguan)** seemed more appropriate.

I noted above a common refrain on the Maoist past, as a time when people were fooled or duped (**shangdang**). Individual agency was denied, people had no "mind", no "self". However, alongside this denigration of the past - which serves the interests of the Communist Party if kept within bounds - there were also more positive assessments of the past. In rural China, Ann Anagnost (1989) found that egalitarianism although officially repudiated remains an important element of popular peasant values. She concluded that "the fear of polarization is based on a memory of the old society recreated in local histories" (215). In Shanghai, too, many of my older informants, in particular, harked back to the early 1950s as a time with little corruption, good order, equality and a sense of shared goals. The certainties of this past, a collective memory, rarefied, embellished and cleansed by the passage of time, and facilitated by "politically enforced amnesia" (Schwarcz 1991: 98) were a basis for considerable nostalgia (**huaijiu** - "cherish/yearn for the past"). This nostalgia could also extend to those born after the 1950s, a nostalgia without memory. Of course, nostalgia may remain as just that, but these "memories" do provide a latent, and potentially fertile, source for the creation of a powerful political agenda.

Like Su Xiaokang I found that young people's knowledge of the Cultural Revolution,

let alone the 1950s, was generally extremely limited.[14] It may be, therefore, that symbols from this era will become particularly malleable and capable of incorporation into new demands. Is it too fanciful to suppose that in future protests for participants who find themselves in a "present, which is confused, incoherent and disturbing" (Zonabend 1984: 139) that the "memories" of a stable, well-ordered period may be particularly appealing? At a time when state officials appear to be busily re-inventing (cf. Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983) Shanghai's pre-1949 past as a desirable future is it possible that "Maoist" emblems of egalitarianism and class struggle could become the focus, the rallying call, for participants in protest movements?

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It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of Despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us...

Charles Dickens A Tale of Two Cities 1960 [1859]

A particularly insightful informant told me how he had read A Tale of Two Cities at school in the late 1930s. He remarked that:

> Although I could not really understand them I especially liked the opening lines and can still recite them. Decades later, after experiencing many changes, I read them again. I felt that now I could understand what Dickens meant - he was also writing at a time of revolution. These lines are extremely appropriate to China.

It may seem rather eccentric to conclude an ethnography of contemporary Shanghai with a quote from Charles Dickens, even though Dickens may, I would argue, be regarded as one of the greatest of urban ethnographers. However, this ethnographic "snapshot" encapsulates both the dialectic of my own practices of research and the quotation serves as a fitting summary of Shanghai's future. In the first instance this vignette evokes the eminently reflexive and human character of ethnographic research. My understandings of this text were informed and altered by the comments of this Shanghai citizen. Whenever I read these lines again my understanding of it will always be imbued with the new sensitivities and insights gained from those fleeting remarks in Shanghai. This seems an apposite metaphor for ethnography - an encounter in which both the researcher and his or her confidants are mutually, often imperceptibly, and irrevocably changed. The lines of Dickens also seem to encapsulate both the promise and danger which lies in store for Shanghai and its inhabitants. There is everything before us, there is nothing before us....

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[14]In November 1988 Su Xiaokang wrote that "[t]hough less than twenty years have passed, the children of today are as ignorant of the Cultural Revolution as if it belonged to another century; they find it extremely strange as well as inconceivable" (cited in Su & Wang 1991: 291).

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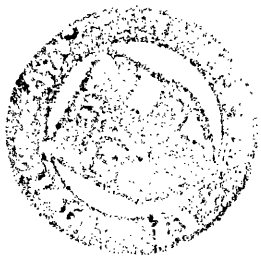

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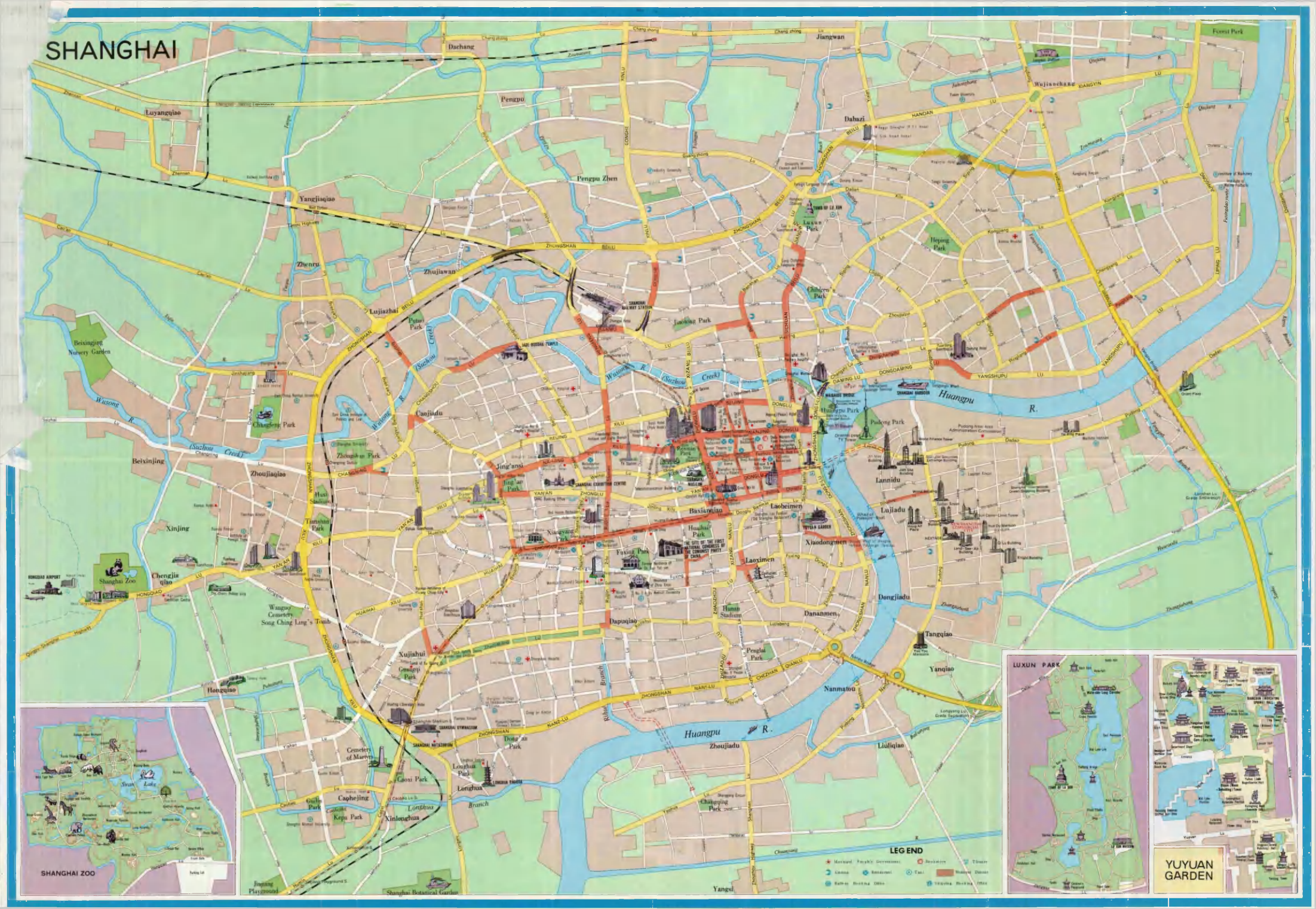
SHANGHAI
Dachang
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Forest Park
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Pengpu
Dahazi
Pengpu Zhen
Yangjiaqiao
Zhenru
Zhujiawan
Lujiazhai
Beixinging Nursery Garden
Changfeng Park
Zhongshan Park
Beixinjing
Zhoujiaqiao
Xinjing
Shanghai Zoo
Chengjia qiao
Wanguo Cemetery
Song Ching Ling's Tomb
Hongqiao
Jing'ansi
Jing'an Park
Caojiadu
Putuo Park
Jade Buddha Temple
Shanghai Railway Station
Jiaotong Park
Renmin Park
Shanghai Exhibition Centre
Shanghai Museum
Baxianqiao
Huashi Stadium
Huaihai Park
Xiangyang Park
Fuxing Park
Laobeimen
Laoximen
Xiaodongmen
Dapuqiao
Huangpu Park
Pudong Park
Lannidu
Lujiadu
Nanpu Bridge
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Dongjiadu
Dananmen
Hunan Stadium
Tangqiao
Yanqiao
Nanmatou
Liuliqiao
Zhoujiadu
Penglai Park
Changqing Park
Xujiahui
Cemetery of Martyrs
Gaoxi Park
Caphejing
Xinlonghua
Longhua Park
Longhua Temple
Longhua Brunch
Dongan Park
Shanghai Gymnasium
Shanghai Natatorium
Jinjiang Playground
Shanghai Botanical Garden
Yangsi
Huangpu R.
Wusong R.
Suzhou Creek
Waisong R.
LEG END
SHANGHAI ZOO
Swan Lake
LUXUN PARK
YUYUAN GARDEN

上海导游图

SHANGHAI

TOURIST MAP

China Map Press

You You Mansions

You you Mansions, a synthetic one invested by Shanghai Y[illegible] General Industrial Development Corporation alone, covering a space of 9,000m², total construction area of 36,000 m², contains advanced rooms, presidents apartments, Sino-western sightseeing dining-hall, commercial center, offices, market and entertainment center.

Located at the entrance of Nan-pu Bridge in Lujiazui Finance and Trade Zone, Pudong New Area, You-you Mansions with good traffic facilities and position, is the first star building of coming to Pudong New Area from Nan-pu Bridge with multi-function and advanced equipment.

SHANGHAI TOURIST MAP
(English Edition)
Compiled and Published by China Map Press
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1st edition. 1st impression. APR 1994. Shanghai
ISBN7-80031-036-1/K34 00350

Waitan Scenery

SHANGHAI

Highlights for Tourists

The Site of the First National Congress of the CPC 76 Xingye Lu (once called 106 Wangzhi Lu), is the place where the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China was secretly held in July, 1921, which proclaimed the founding of the Party, approved the first Party constitution and elected the Party's central leading organs

The Zigzag Bridge in Yuyuan Garden

After liberation the place of great historical significance was restored to what it looked like at the time of the first meeting.

Residence of Zhou Enlai 73 Sinan Lu is a four-storey garden building. It was once the residence of the Shanghai Agency of the Delegation of the Communist Party of China in 1946, and was then called Residence of Mr. Zhou.

In May, 1946, the Delegation of the Communist Party of China headed by Comrade Zhou Enlai moved from Chongqing to Nanjing and set up two agencies, one in Nanjing and the other in Shanghai. Instead of using its own name, the Shanghai Agency put on the gate of the building a board on which were written: Residence of Mr. Zhou. During that period Comrade Zhou Enlai came here several times from Nanjing to hold press conferences, consult with democratic personages about the state affairs, and expose the reactionary features of Chiang Kai-shek who was playing on service to peace talk while preparing for a civil war.

Former Residence of Dr. Sun Yat-sen 7 Xinzhan Lu was the place where Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the great pioneer of the Chinese democratic revolution, lived and worked in his later years.

Lu Xun Museum and Tomb of Lu Xun 946 Lu Xun, the great Chinese writer, thinker and revolutionary, had lived and fought in Shanghai from October 1927 till 19 October 1936, the day when he passed away. These were the most brilliant years in his life. In memory of this great man, Lu Xun Museum was built in 1951 in Hongkou Park, Shanghai. It bears Comrade Zhou Enlai's inscriptions. In 1956, Lu Xun's tomb was moved to the present site in Hongkou Park from the International Cemetery in the western suburbs of the city. The characters "Mr. Lu Xun's Tomb" on the tombstone are the calligraphy of Chairman Mao. On the flowered lawn in front of the tomb is a bronze statue of Mr. Lu Xun sitting in an armchair. It was cast in 1961 to commemorate his eightieth birthday.

Shanghai Museum Located on Henan Nanlu, the Shanghai Museum came into being in December 1952. It has a rich collection of cultural relics of ancient times. Now open to the public in the museum are the exhibitions of Chinese bronzeware, ceramics and paintings.

Shanghai Exhibition Centre Located on Yan'an Zhonglu, the exhibition hall was built in 1955. With a floor space of over 58,000 square metres and a display area of 20,000 square metres, it is an important place for exhibiting new industrial products, arts and crafts and exchanging new techniques. In the centre of the building is a 106-metre high gift steel tower. The Friendship Restaurant, which can seat 400 guests at one time, is also a component part of the centre.

A General Survey

One of China's three municipalities directly under the central government, Shanghai is a comprehensive industrial base and one of the most important ports for foreign trade of the country.

Shanghai lies in the middle section of China's east coast, serving as the gateway of the Changjiang (the Yangtze) River basin. With a population of 12,060,000, it consists of twelve urban districts and ten suburban counties, covering a total area of 6,300 square kilometres, over 340 square kilometres of which being occupied by the city proper.

Located in the sub-tropical region, Shanghai is favoured with a mild and humid climate and four distinct seasons. August is the hottest month with an average temperature of 28°C, while January, with an average temperature of 3.5°C, is the coldest month of the year. The average annual temperature is about 15°C. Annual precipitation averages over 1,000mm.

Shanghai was originally a fishing village. A county named Huating was first set up in the region in 751 A.D. (the tenth year of the Tianbao Period in the Tang Dynasty), and Shanghai County came into being in 1292 A.D. (the twenty-ninth year of the Zhiyuan Period of the Yuan Dynasty). In the 16th century, handicraft, textile and commerce were already quite developed in Shanghai. In 1685 (the twenty-fourth year of Emperor Kangxi's reign), a customs house was set up by the Qing Government to take care of the taxes on the goods imported and exported by waterways, thus it became a flourishing seaport. From the 1840s on, Shanghai was subjected to frequent imperialist aggressions, and was gradually reduced to the status of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial city.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, Shanghai, through forty-odd years of construction, has become an industrial city with various branches, among which the important ones are the metallurgical, machinery, electronic, chemical, ship building, meters and instruments, and textile industries. The city is now able to design and manufacture relatively high precision set-equipments. At the same time great progress has been made in science and technology, culture and education. Dozens of institutions have been set up to carry out scientific researches in atomic energy, semi-conductors, laser, mifrared ray, satellite technology, electronic computers, etc. At present the city boasts 59-odd colleges and universities.

Shanghai is one of China's important communication hubs. Its communication lines by air, land and water link up all parts of the country. It operates direct flights to over 20 big and medium-sized cities, such as Beijing, Shenyang, Jinan, Fuzhou, Guangzhou, Guilin, Chengdu, Xi'an, Lanzhou, and Wuhan; besides it has regular air service to Hongkong as well. There are also direct international air service to Osaka, Nagasaki, Tokyo, San Francisco and New York. What is more, its waterways also provide the city with easy communication and transportation. Port facilities of the Huangpu River extend to as long as 80 kilometres, with a dock portion of 14,000 metres long. The harbour is open to 10,000-ton ships all the year round.

From Shanghai one can get to Chongqing by steamer via Wuhan and the famous Three Gorges, and to Qingdao, Dalian, Qinhuangdao, Tianjin by sea vessel. Besides there are passenger-cargo liners to and from Hongkong. The city's land communication is even more developed. Everyday, over 80 expresses arrive or stop at the Shanghai Railway Station, or leave the station for other parts of the country.

Yuyuan Garden Situated on Yuyuan Lu, it is considered one of the most well-known gardens in South China. Built in 1559-1577, the garden is divided into two parts, the front garden and the back garden. Though small with an area of just 20,000 square metres, it has more than 30 picturesque and fascinating scenes.

Dianchun (Indicating Spring) Hall is the master piece of architecture in the garden. It was once made the headquarters for the rebels in the northern part of the city during the Shanghai Dagger Society Uprising (1853), a famous peasant uprising in the Chinese history. Now on display in the hall are lots of historical relics related to the uprising.

Jade Buddha Temple It is a famous old temple in Shanghai. Originally built in Jiangwan in 1882, the temple was then moved to the present site in Anyuan Lu, Putuo District in 1918. The Jade Buddha worshipped here was from Burma. Other Buddha figures, apart from some recently carved ones, were carved in various dynasties, such as the Northern Wei (386-534) and Tang (618-907) dynasties. Besides, it also has a collection of Buddhist scriptures and paintings of the Tang Dynasty, the Five Dynasties (907-960), the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

Yufo (Jade Buddha) Temple

Shanghai Zoo (Xijiao Park) Situated in the west suburbs of the city, the zoo was completed in 1954, occupying an area of 70 hectares. Exhibited here are over 2,000 heads of animals in more than 200 species, among which are some rare Chinese birds and animals, such as giant panda, golden-haired monkey, Northeast China tiger, red-crowned crane, white-lipped deer and the Yangtze crocodile and some rare birds and animals from other countries, such as hippopotamus, giraffe, sea lion and penguin.

Shanghai Botanical Garden Situated on Longhua Lu, in the south suburbs, the garden was built in 1954, and mainly cultivates potted flowers and miniature trees with rockery—next to none of the same kind in the size and variety in the country. On display now are 9,000 pots of flowers and miniature trees of over 400 species. Most of the trees shown here are over 10 years old and the oldest is already several hundred years.

Potted flowers and trees with rockery show the nature in miniaturized size. This is a unique Chinese art in gardening with about 2,000 years of history. A visit to the garden can help one to learn the origin and development of the art and is a good chance to enjoy some ancient and famous pots as well.

Longhua Pagoda and Longhua Temple Originally built in 247 A.D. and reconstructed in 977, the 1,700-year-old Longhua Pagoda, standing near Longhua town in the south suburbs of the city, is one of the rare existing ancient towers in Shanghai. Brick and wood structured, it is a seven-storey octagonal pagoda with ingenious and delicate features. The Longhua Temple is a magnificent piece of architecture, consisting of five rows of majestic halls, an arhait hall and bell and drum towers.

Huxi (Ancient Scenic Beauty) Garden It is a garden situated in the suburban town of Nanxiang, Jiading County, about 15 kilometres west of Shanghai. It was first built in 1522-1566 in the Ming Dynasty and then renovated in 1746, the eleventh year of Emperor Qianlong's reign in the Qing Dynasty.

The garden occupies an area of 6.6 hectares. Its main architectural spots are some pillars inscribed with Buddhist scripture which were put up in the Tang Dynasty, a stone tower of the Song Dynasty, the Geese-playing Pool, a stone boat, the White Crane Pavilion, the Chamber of Soft Murmurs and the Plum Blossom Hall.

Confucian Temple Situated in Nan Daje, Chenxiangzhen, Jiading County, it was the place where the rulers of past dynasties worshipped Confucius. It was originally built in 1219 (12th year of the Period of Jiading, the Song Dynasty), and enlarged in the Yuan and Ming dynasties to become a Confucian temple of considerable size. On entering the temple, one finds 24 rooms along both the east and west sides of the yard, twelve on each side, which used to be imperial examination rooms. The magnificent Dacheng Hall is the principal building of the temple. It keeps many stone tablets with inscriptions by famous calligraphers of the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. The 600-year-old cypress in front of the hall is beautifully named "Ancient Dragon and Phoenix Cypress".

In front of the temple is a pit pool where five streams meet, and in the pool is a small hill named Yingtai. With the streams flowing like five dragons and the hill standing as a pearl, the place resembles a picture of five dragons scrambling for a pearl, thus it was named "Hailong Tai" (a pool where dragons meet). The streams and the pool were dredged in 1588, 16th year of the Period of Wanli, the Ming Dynasty. Yet by the liberation the place had become a ruin through frequent wars. Repairing works started in 1978 and lasted for three years. With the pool and the streams dredged, flowers and trees planted and pavilions repaired, the place has become a beautiful garden attracting many visitors.

Tourist Spots in Songjiang County

Square Tower Originally named the Tower of Shengjiao (Holy Religion) Temple, it was first erected in 949, the second year of Qianyou Period of the Later Han Dynasty, and was rebuilt during 1068-1094, the periods of Xining and Yuanyou in the Northern Song Dynasty. The nine-storey tower is 48.5 metres high and square shaped, hence the name.

Zhaobi To the north of the Square Tower stands Zhaobi, a screen wall built in 1370 (the third year of Hongwu Period in the Ming Dynasty). On the brick facade of the wall was carved a picture of 4.75×6.1 m. The picture was elegantly carved and its figures are vivid. The wall is considered as a rare and precious piece of relics.

Zuibai Pool Outside the West Gate of Songjiang, the 1.3-hectare Zuibai Pool is a garden with a long history of over 200 years. Originally it was the private garden of Gu Dashen, a famous painter in the early Qing Dynasty. With a pond as its centre, the scenery of Zuibai Pool consists of a hall called Sisuitang, which is ringed around by dotted bamboo and rocks to the north of the pool, and an ancient elm, the Big and Small Lake Pavilions, the Land Boat, the Water Chamber, etc. to the east.

Dianshanhu Excursion Area Situated to the west of Qingpu Town in the western suburb of Shanghai City, this area consists of two scenic spots of Dianfeng and Yangshe, with the Grand View Garden adapted from the Chinese classic "Dream of Red Chamber", and some ancient style buildings. Nearby there are swimming pools and aquatic sports fields.

Tour on Huangpu River Huangpu River is an important water course for international trade and friendly visits. With a total length of 80 kilometres, the harbour area of the river is navigable perennially for ships with tunnage at about 10,000. The trip starts from Waitan on the cruiseship "Pujiang", heading to the northeast, passing Yangshupu, Fuxing Island, Gongqing Senlin Park, the petrol plant, the shipyard, and Baoshan Iron and Steel Work along the river, reaching Wusongkou, where the tourists can have a spectacular view of the confluence of Huangpu and Changjiang rivers, then returning back to the starting point. The whole voyage covers some 80 kilometres and takes three and a half hours.

Longhua Pagoda

USEFUL TELEPHONE

NUMBER ENQUIRIES	114
INTL ENQUIRIES	116
FIRE SERVICE	119
AMBULANCE	120
POLICE SECURITY	110
WEATHER FORECAST	121
TIME SERVICE	117
AIRLINS ENQUIRIES	2537664
TRAIN ENQUIRIES	3179090
SHIP ENQUIRIES	3261261
CONSUME COMPAIN	3229590

Oriental Pearl T.V Tower

Climate and Clothing Shanghai has a mild and humid climate. In spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) jackets and woolen sweaters are appropriate. It is quite hot in summer so a shirt is enough. A heavy woolen overcoat is needed in winter. The plum rains usually come at the turn of spring and summer, and there are frequent rainstorms in summer. During these seasons, some rain gear will come in handy.

Temperature in Shanghai (in Centigrade)

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average	3.5	4.9	8.2	13.7	18.6	23.4	28.0	27.6	23.5	17.8	13.5	6.5
Max.	10.0	12.9	17.6	21.7	25.1	30.9	34.5	34.9	27.3	25.5	20.6	13.3
Min.	-0.4	-3.0	-3.4	1.1	5.0	12.5	19.4	19.6	12.9	4.7	-1.8	-6.2

Nanjing Lu

Nanpu Bridge

A BRIEF MAP OF SHANGHAI

Hongqiao Development Zone

Important Anniversaries and Holidays in China

New Year's Day: January 1
Spring Festival: 1st to 3rd days of 1st month of the lunar year (usually in first half of February)
International Working Women's Day: March 8
International Labour Day: May 1
Chinese Youth Day: May 4
International Children's Day: June 1
Anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party: July 1
Army Day (anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army): August 1
National Day (anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China): October 1

Work goes on in government offices, factories, schools and shops on ordinary red-letter days; service establishments and public places of entertainment are open as usual on all holidays. This ensures that foreign travelers can go on with their activities as on other days.